F 234
.N8 A8
Copy 1

Class
Book

Armstrong
WEX

The Summer of the Pestilence.

A

HISTORY

OF THE RAVAGES OF THE

YELLOW FEVER

IN NORFOLK, VIRGINIA,

A. D. 1855.

BY

GEORGE D. ARMSTRONG, D.D.
PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORFOLK.

ASTOR LIBRARY
NEW-YORK

Second Edition.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1856.

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1856, by
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

STEREOTYPED BY L. JOHNSON & CO.
PHILADELPHIA.

CONTENTS.

PREFATORY LETTER.

PAGE

Reasons for writing this History—Plan to be pursued 7

LETTER I.

Announcement of the Existence of Yellow Fever in Norfolk—Effect of this Announcement—Way in which it seems to have been introduced—Reasons for and against its General Spread—Present Condition of the City—Course of Duty..... 13

LETTER II.

Spread of the Fever—Its mild Type—Visit to Portsmouth—Deserted state of that place—Panic—Causes of this Panic—Quarantine Regulations—

PAGE

Quarantine Order of Welden—Death in the Street—Howard Association formed—Burning of Barry's Row—Day of Prayer appointed..... 31

LETTER III.

First Death among the Members of the Presbyterian Church—Arrival of Physicians and Nurses from abroad—Removal of the Hospital to Lambert's Point—Reported Flight of the Protestant Clergy—True Statement..... 49

LETTER IV.

Effect of Cold Storms in the Spread of the Fever—People bewildered—Burial of Rev. A. Dibbrell—Death of Mayor Woodis—Aid from abroad—Establishment of the Howard Hospital..... 64

LETTER V.

A Pastor's Sabbath in a Plague-stricken City..... 75

LETTER VI.

The Crisis of the Epidemic—Frightful Mortality—Burying in Pits—A Burial in a Plague-stricken City—Appearance of the Cemeteries—Appearance

PAGE
of the Harbour—Cases of Robbery—Character of Nurses from abroad 92

LETTER VII.

The Pestilence abating—Death of Miss Eliza Soutter—Scene at the Post-Office—Proposal to remove the People to Old Point 109

LETTER VIII.

Personal Experience of the Fever—Unfulfilled Presentiment of Death—Proposed Departure from Norfolk 118

LETTER IX.

Family Afflictions 131

LETTER X.

Mortality among the Clergy and Physicians—Remarkable Recovery—Yellow Fever a Disease not to be trifled with—Letters from abroad—"A City of Convalescents" 143

LETTER XI.

PAGE
Disappearance of the Fever — The Orphans—The Plague-Fly—Description of it—Hypotheses respecting its Nature 156

LETTER XII.

Results of maturer Reflection—How was the Fever introduced into Norfolk?—Why was it so fatal?—Is Yellow Fever contagious?—Practical Inferences 168

Prefatory Letter.

TO WILLIAM MAXWELL, ESQ.,

SECRETARY OF THE VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

WHEN I had the pleasure of meeting with you in Richmond, a few weeks ago, you expressed the wish that some one should write a brief history of the pestilence from which our city has suffered during the past summer, remarking that this visitation of the pestilence had been of such unexampled violence, that its history would properly enter into the history of our State; and that for this reason, as well as others, it seemed desirable that some more connected and generally acceptable account should be given of it than that furnished in the reports which appeared from time to time in the daily papers. This undertaking you were pleased to urge upon me, as one who had remained in the city during this "summer of the pestilence," and more

especially as one who, in the discharge of the duties belonging to a minister of the gospel and the pastor of a Christian church, had been called to see and know more than most others of what was really occurring in our midst.

My reply then was, that, although the same request had been made from other quarters, I could not consent to undertake the work, partly because of the intrinsic difficulty of the task, but mainly because I felt that it must be to me an exceedingly painful one. There are scenes in nature which the painter, who has studied the capacities of his art, will never undertake to transfer to canvas. So are there incidents in the history of this pestilence,—incidents of which I was an eye-witness,—which no one, it seems to me, who has tried the capacities, or rather, I would say, the incapacities, of human language, will ever undertake to put upon record. Human language is the creature of every-day life, and therefore unfitted to record events which, occurring but once in an age, do not enter into the common experience of man. I felt, too, that to me such an undertaking must prove an exceedingly painful one. Not that I could ever wish to forget the many dear friends numbered

among "the dead of the pestilence;" nor that I could willingly, even if such a thing were possible, obliterate the impression made upon my memory by the most painful scene of parting through which I have been called to pass. Saddening though these recollections be, yet does the scarred heart cling to them as choicest treasures; but it is one thing to retain and cherish these recollections in the privacy of one's own bosom, and a very different thing to expose them to the public gaze; and this last is that from which I shrank.

Since my return home, this undertaking has been urged upon me for a different reason. The thought has been suggested, that, should this terrible pestilence prove to be "a travelling epidemic," on its way northward, (and I know that the ablest physicians from the south, who were with us, and who had watched its course for the several years last past, believed that such was its character,) a brief history of its ravages in Norfolk might be of great service in any city in which it might hereafter appear, in showing to the inhabitants of such city just what dangers they had to apprehend and in what ways they could labour most effectually for the relief of the suffering. Never can I forget the kind-

ness, the prompt, the generous aid, extended to us by our northern brethren, in our time of trial;—timely aid, but for which there had been few left to tell the sad story of our sufferings; and God forbid that, for any merely personal considerations, I should refuse to acknowledge that kindness in any way and in any measure in which it may be possible for me to do it. My hope is—my prayer to God is—that Norfolk may prove to be the northern terminus of the course of this pestilence. And yet such may not be the plan of Him who directeth its steps; and the bare possibility that it may burst upon some of our sister cities to the north, during the coming summer, has changed my purpose, as expressed to you, and determined me to undertake the work, painful though it must prove to be.

In order that I may accomplish the main purpose for which I write, and the only purpose which could have overcome my repugnance to the task, it will be necessary for me to confine myself pretty much to my own personal observations,—a record of that which I have heard, and seen, and felt, during the prevalence of the fever in our city,—adding such statistical and general statements only as are necessary to complete the record of these personal observa-

tions. For this reason, it has seemed to me best to give what I shall write the form of a series of letters, purporting to have been written from time to time, as the pestilence progressed in our midst. Many of the incidents of which I shall have occasion to speak have so burned in their record upon my memory, that no effort is required to bring them up again in all their original distinctness. Others I shall supply from memoranda made and letters written at the time. In these letters I shall endeavour to recall my feelings and impressions, so as to write just as if the letters had been written at the dates they bear; the only liberty taken being to correct certain errors, as to dates and numbers, into which I would have fallen had I then written them.

I have taken the liberty of addressing these letters to you, in part because you have for many years honourably filled the office of Secretary of the Virginia Historical Society,—and there seemed to me a propriety in giving to a series of historical letters such a direction,—but principally because you are a native of Norfolk, and long filled the office of ruling elder in the church of which I am now the pastor, and are, therefore, personally acquainted

with many of those of whom I shall have occasion to speak; for, as the pastor of a particular Christian church, my personal recollections must, in large measure, concern the members of that church and congregation; and I know that you do feel and have felt an interest in them such as could be felt by no stranger.

It might seem, at first thought, that, pursuing such a plan as this, I would not give what could properly be called *a History of the Pestilence in Norfolk*. A full history would be but a multiplication of the scenes and incidents I shall have occasion to describe; and if the reader, as he passes along, will bear in mind the fact that mine is one of nine Christian congregations in the city of Norfolk, he will need nothing more to render this a proper history of the ravages of the pestilence in Norfolk.

With the wish that you may long live to watch over the interests of our Historical Society,

I remain yours truly,

GEO. D. ARMSTRONG.

NORFOLK, VA., *December* 1, 1855.

THE

SUMMER OF THE PESTILENCE.

LETTER I.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE EXISTENCE OF YELLOW FEVER IN NORFOLK—EFFECT OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT—WAY IN WHICH IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED—REASONS FOR AND AGAINST ITS GENERAL SPREAD—PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CITY—COURSE OF DUTY.

Wednesday, Aug. 1, 1855.

On the day before yesterday it became generally known here that the yellow fever existed in our city. As you have probably learned from the daily papers, this terrible disease has prevailed in Gosport for some time past; and within the last ten days, quite a number of cases have occurred in Portsmouth, just across the river from us. Now, I think there is no reasonable doubt

that it exists in our city also. I use this expression, "no reasonable doubt," because there are some who do doubt the existence of the yellow fever here; calling the disease which is causing great alarm among our citizens "the Upshur fever," after our good friend, Dr. Geo. L. Upshur, in whose practice most of the cases, thus far, have occurred.

It is a very difficult matter for a physician, situated as Dr. Upshur has been, to know just what he ought to do. It seems now that cases of fever have existed in our midst since the 16th of July, which Dr. Upshur, although for a time unwilling to admit it, now that the disease has had time to show its true nature, has become thoroughly convinced are cases of yellow fever. On Monday, he took the responsibility of making known what he believed to be the truth in the case. And now, while some are blaming him for not having made known these facts at an earlier

date, so that, the instant the first case occurred, provision might have been made for the removal of the sick beyond the city limits, and such other sanitary measures adopted as would have prevented the fever spreading among us; others are blaming him just as loudly for having made the declaration he has, at all, speaking of the doctor as an alarmist, and calling the fever "the Upshur fever,"—affirming that, without cause, he has injured the business of the city to an amount which many thousands will not cover. For my own part, I have no doubt that Dr. Upshur has acted conscientiously in this whole matter; nor have I any doubt that he has acted rightly, too, and that the yellow fever does exist among us at this time.

If this be so, how has the fever come among us? you will ask. In the present excited state of the public mind on this subject, it is next to impossible to tell what to believe and what not. Rumours,

almost without number, are afloat; but most of them, I presume, so changed and distorted, that, could they return to those with whom they originated, they would not be recognised. Your old friend, T. Broughton, Sr., Editor of the Herald, and Secretary of our Board of Health, appears to have about as cool a head upon his shoulders as any man I meet with; and as I know he has taken pains to get at the truth, I regard the statements in his paper as containing the most reliable information to be gotten at the present time. In his issue of yesterday he states, that about ten days ago a number of poor families removed from Gosport to "Barry's Row," in our city,—the section to which the disease is thus far confined; and that it is thought they brought the disease with them, some having the poison in their system then which has since developed itself, and that others have taken the fever from them, or perhaps, from the infected

clothing and bedding they brought with them.

The origin of the fever in Gosport is traced by all, I believe, to the Ben Franklin, a steamer, bound from the Island of St. Thomas, where the fever is prevailing, to New York, but compelled to put into Hampton Roads in distress. This vessel arrived in our waters on the 7th of June, and after remaining at quarantine for twelve days, came up to Gosport on the 19th of June, and was at once taken to Page and Allen's ship-yard, for the purpose of having certain repairs made upon her. From the time she left St. Thomas, she is said to have been in so leaky a condition as to render constant pumping necessary. And it is now reported—upon how good authority I cannot learn—that two deaths among her crew, which occurred on her passage, and which her captain reported to our health officer as caused by other diseases, were in fact deaths from

yellow fever. This much is certain: that her passengers left her in Hampton Roads, not one of them remaining to meet our health officer when he visited her. This, together with several other suspicious circumstances attending her entrance here, led to the exaction of a promise from her captain, as a condition for allowing her to go up to Gosport, that, in effecting her repairs, her hold should not be broken up. This pledge has been violated; and the first case of fever in Gosport is said to have been that of a labourer employed in breaking up her hold, who, after a short illness, died on the 8th of July, exhibiting all the characteristic symptoms of yellow fever. So soon as this case was reported, the vessel was ordered back to quarantine, where she now lies, with the yellow flag at her masthead.

Page and Allen's ship-yard is in the southern part of Gosport, almost immediately adjoining the main entrance to the

navy-yard. The row of buildings in which all the first cases of fever occurred there is a row of the same general character with "Barry's Row" in our city:—the buildings small, sadly out of repair, overcrowded with inhabitants, and filthy in the extreme. I was told by a gentleman in Portsmouth, the other day, that when the authorities of that place made an examination of these buildings, preparatory to the adoption of such sanitary measures as the case might call for, they found in one of the tenements the dead body of a calf, in a state of partial putrefaction. I mention this fact, because I believe that it alone will give you a better idea of the condition of things in those buildings than could be given by any description in general terms. The dead body of a calf rotting in a human dwelling has its natural accompaniments, which there is no need that I should tell you of. Barry's Row, in our city, is of the same general character, and, as I know, from having

passed it frequently in the course of the last two months, in an exceedingly filthy condition.

The infected district in Gosport was fenced in some two weeks ago; and until within the last week, it was reported by the sanitary committee of Portsmouth that all the cases of fever in Portsmouth could be clearly traced to that infected district. Within the last week, however, cases have occurred which cannot be easily, if at all, traced to Gosport; and the opinion is pretty generally entertained that the infection has now spread into Portsmouth.

In our city, the Board of Health had the infected district, including Barry's Row and the building immediately adjoining, fenced in on Monday, and took prompt measures for having a temporary hospital erected at Oak Grove—a grove just beyond the corporation limits, on the north side of the city. These buildings are now so nearly completed that to-day they are removing the

sick to them; hoping by these measures to stay the spread of the pestilence among us.

As you would naturally suppose, the announcement made on Monday, that the yellow fever existed in our midst, caused no little excitement among our people; in fact, a much greater excitement than the occasion seemed to justify; and many families are already leaving our city. In those places in which the yellow fever frequently prevails, its advent is looked upon as so much a matter of course, that, I am told, it causes little or no alarm. Not so with us. Nearly thirty years have now elapsed since it prevailed to any extent in Norfolk. A few scattering cases there have been, from time to time, such as occur in all our commercial cities trading with the West Indies; but, then, these cases have caused but little alarm, as the disease has shown but little disposition to spread from them. For my own part, I know not what

may be before us, but I cannot help taking a more hopeful view of our case than many do; while, at the same time, I must admit that there are some things which seem to wear a very threatening aspect; and I am not much surprised at the panic which has arisen among us. Should the yellow fever prevail here with any thing like the violence it did last year in Savannah, with the three long hot months which must intervene between this and frost to do its work in, it must make terrible havoc; and in prospect of such a probability, I can only say, "God help us! for the help of man is vain."

By those who are disposed to take the most cheerful view of our case and prospects, it is said, this fever appears to be of a very mild and manageable type. "Only seventeen cases in fourteen days, and three deaths out of that number." (Report of our Board of Health for to-day.) In Gosport, too, the report on the 24th—the

last report I have at hand—was that in the nineteen days which had then elapsed since the first case came under the care of the physician, there had been but six deaths, and there were then but fifteen cases under treatment. Since then it has spread into Portsmouth, but has not assumed a malignant type anywhere. It is also said that in former years,—in 1822 and '26,—when the yellow fever last prevailed in Norfolk to any extent and in a violent form, it was confined to the part of the city south of Main Street and west of Market Square, no case ever having been known to originate out of this, the infected district, in those years; that persons living in that district had just to remove to the north of Main Street, and they were as safe from the fever as they would have been a thousand miles off. Since then, in consequence of the growth of our city, the part south of Main Street has been almost entirely given up to business, four-fifths

of our people now residing north of that street; and hence, judging from the experience of the past, as little likely to take the fever here, at home, as they would be anywhere.

By those disposed to take a more gloomy view of our prospects, it is said, the fever now existing in our midst is not the ordinary yellow fever, but the African fever, as some say, or, as others say, the yellow fever in an epidemic form, differing from the ordinary yellow fever just as epidemic malignant scarlet fever differs from that disease in its ordinary form; that it is a "travelling epidemic," like the cholera some years ago; that it appeared first in Rio in 1850, and has been gradually making its way northward, along the Atlantic coast; that it was this "travelling epidemic" which caused such a terrible destruction of life in Savannah, last summer; and that its appearance among us at this time is in accordance with predic-

tions made several years ago by physicians who had made the "epidemic yellow fever" their study. And further, it is said, it has now located itself in a new spot, entirely beyond the old infected district, and in a spot very well adapted to spread it generally though the city.

What to think of our prospects, as already intimated, I hardly know. Could I be persuaded that this was the same disease which decimated Savannah last summer, I should rejoice to see every one of our citizens who could, flee to some place of safety "until the storm be over-past;" for in Savannah the only safety seemed to be in flight. But all the known facts respecting the origin of this fever among us seem utterly at variance with the idea that this is the "travelling epidemic" which some suppose it to be. It seems clearly to have been imported in the Ben Franklin; and I see no reason to think that, if that ill-fated vessel had never been suffered to

come into our harbour, or even if the pledge given by her captain, that her hold should not be broken up, had been observed, there would have been a case of yellow fever among us now. It was by the breaking up of the hold of that steamer that the fatal miasm was let loose which has caused all the threatening consequences we see. It may be that there are facts which, if I knew them, would change my opinion on this point; and I know that it is a thing improbable in itself that, in the present excited state of public feeling, and in the midst of the almost innumerable reports which are passing from mouth to mouth, we should be able to separate the true from the false, or to get at all the facts which bear upon this question. The opinion which I have expressed, therefore, is nothing more than an opinion based upon the facts now known to me, and as I have stated them above.

Besides all this, I have another ground

for hoping that the yellow fever will not assume an epidemic form among us—and that is, the present condition of our city. As you well know, within the last ten years our streets have been so generally paved, that Norfolk is now one of the most thoroughly-paved cities in the Union; and although the site of the city is level, the streets have been so carefully graded that the water runs off almost as soon as it does in Richmond, with all its hills. In consequence of this, and the general substitution of rain-water for the brackish well-water once used, a careful comparison of our bills of mortality with those of other cities will show, that for the ten years last past Norfolk has been one of the healthiest cities on the Atlantic seaboard. At the present time the general health of the place is as good as usual. And although our city is no exception to the general rule that, in every place of any size, there are particular localities, such as Barry's Row,

where poverty and filth seem to hold possession by a sort of "*fee simple*," yet our city is, at the present time, by no means a dirty one. I have heard some persons express a different opinion on this last-mentioned point; but this, I think, is owing to the fact that the existence of the fever in our midst has made them more sharp-sighted than usual; and they see and notice filth now which, at other times, would escape their notice altogether.

For all these reasons, I could wish that our people who are now leaving could take a different view of matters, and quietly remain at home; yet I am not willing to take the responsibility of advising any to remain. It is enough for me to decide that question for myself; and my own convictions of duty were never plainer than they are at this time, that home is my place, come what may. The physician and the Christian pastor are, by their profession, called to minister to the sick, the

dying, and the afflicted; and, certainly, a time of pestilence, when their services are most needed, is no time for them to flee. Not that there may not be, in particular instances, circumstances which may render it the duty of a physician or a pastor to leave home, even at such a time; but the presumptions are, in both cases alike, all against their leaving. The question which they should ask is not Why should I stay? but Why should I not stay? and no mere danger to themselves personally should enter into the decision of this question. For myself, I can say that, in the prospect of the possible spread of the fever throughout our city, I have no anxious thought. The pestilence, when raging in its most terrible violence, and when man stands appalled before it, is yet ever under God's control, and can claim no victims but such as are given it. That mighty God I have been taught by his spirit, I trust, to look up to as "my Father in heaven."

His I am, and him I have vowed to serve. If he has work for me here, in time to come, he can protect me; if he has not, and my work on earth is nearly done, then sooner comes, I hope, the perfect, blessed rest of heaven.

LETTER II.

SPREAD OF THE FEVER—ITS MILD TYPE—VISIT TO PORTSMOUTH—DESERTED STATE OF THAT PLACE—PANIC—CAUSES OF THIS PANIC—QUARANTINE REGULATIONS—QUARANTINE ORDER OF WELDEN—DEATH IN THE STREET—HOWARD ASSOCIATION FORMED—BURNING OF BARRY'S ROW—DAY OF PRAYER APPOINTED.

Monday, Aug. 13, 1855.

SINCE I last wrote you, the *yellow fever*—for all regard the disease prevailing among us as the yellow fever now—has continued to spread in our city. As compared with the fever prevailing here in former years and in other cities, this appears to be the disease in a mild and manageable form. According to the best information I can get, although it has now existed in our city for nearly a month, there had been, up to Saturday last, but about sixty cases treated by our physicians, and out of those

but about twenty had proved fatal. The fever has spread, from the point at which it first appeared, into the infected district of former years, and several cases have occurred on Wide Water Street, west of Commerce Street. This was to be expected, and I believe was anticipated by all. Thus far, no case has occurred in any other part of the city which is not clearly traceable to the infected district or to Portsmouth in its origin; and the deaths have been almost altogether among our foreign population, where want of acclimation, intemperance, poverty, and filth, mark them out as the proper food for any such disease.

Several deaths which have occurred at the Oak-Grove hospital, and reckoned among the twenty, are clearly attributable to the obstinate imprudence of the patients. On yesterday I was told of one who had passed the crisis of the disease, and had every prospect of a speedy recovery, who,

in some way, procured a bottle of whiskey, and, having drunk to intoxication, was subsequently found, some twenty yards from the hospital, lying on the bare ground, at ten o'clock at night. As a matter of course, he was dead before morning. But two cases have occurred in my congregation, both now decidedly convalescent.

In Portsmouth the infection has spread, until now the whole central portion of the town is considered infected. On Tuesday of last week, hearing that Rev. Isaac Handy, pastor of the Middle Street Presbyterian church, was sick with the fever, I went over to Portsmouth to see him. It was the first time I had been there for several weeks, and I was most forcibly struck with the scene of desolation presented on every side. It was a clear, bright, sunshiny day, not warmer than usual for the season; and as I passed through our streets on my way to the ferry-wharf, although there was not the same bustle and appearance of activity

in business which I have often seen, (many of our citizens having gone away,) yet every thing seemed to wear a cheerful aspect; and I doubt whether a stranger would have noticed any thing to remind him of the existence of the yellow fever in our city. I felt more cheerful, myself, than I had for several days past,—the report of our Board of Health, published that morning, giving "no deaths" for the day before. I heard the remark made by a gentleman I met, "Now that the more excitable portion of our people have fled, we shall have a quiet time again."

On landing on the Portsmouth side of the river, all seemed changed. There had been no change in the weather; and yet the atmosphere presented a hazy appearance, much like that which you have often noticed during our Indian summer. The streets were literally deserted. In passing from the ferry-wharf to Mr. Handy's house, I had to go through fully half the length

of the main street of Portsmouth; and yet in all that distance I met but one white person, and saw but one store open. As I passed the end of the market-house, looking down toward Gosport, in the part of the market usually crowded by the country-people, I saw but two market-carts. The negro drivers of these carts were sitting on the curb-stone beside them, and they, with their horses, looked as if wilted down by the heat; and I saw no one there present to buy their marketing.

In returning, I took a somewhat circuitous route, going around by the court-house, then taking my way through parts of the town which I had not seen in going. Everywhere the same deserted appearance met the eye. I noticed in one place a man knocking at the door of a house; and, instead of the door being opened, a woman appeared at an upper window and conversed with him from thence, as if afraid to come

any nearer to him, lest she might take the infection. But that which arrested my attention more particularly than any other evidence of the deserted state of the place was the fact that, although it was about ten o'clock in the day, the principal sound I heard was the crowing of the cock; and this I heard on every side, and with all the distinctness with which it may be heard in the otherwise unbroken stillness of early dawn. Later in the day, when man has gone forth to his labour, the sound of business and the noise of rattling wheels in ordinary circumstances completely overpower it. At the ferry-house I found three or four citizens of Portsmouth, and their only subject of conversation was the sickness and death of their friends and neighbours. One, an undertaker, told me he had received orders for seven coffins that morning.

I know not to what extent my own feelings may have given their tinge to the

scene. I describe it just as it presented itself to me. I have been in Portsmouth several times since; and the appearance of the place, instead of becoming less, is becoming, if possible, more gloomy than it was then. Three-fourths of the population are said to have fled. This, I am inclined to think, is an over-estimate; but certain it is, Portsmouth presents the most deserted, forlorn appearance of any place I have ever seen. Never before have I had as lively a conception of the utter desolation of a plague-stricken city as now.

Such was the state of things on Tuesday last. Since then, Norfolk has been rapidly assuming the same deserted appearance with her sister across the river. The day before yesterday, the Editor of the Herald expressed the opinion that one-half of our population had gone. The panic, during the last four or five days, has been greater even than it was ten days ago. You will say, why is this, if the disease is

of a mild type, and spreading so slowly as represented in last Saturday's report of the Board of Health—not more than sixty cases and twenty deaths in a month? This panic is owing in part to the apprehension excited by the present condition of things in Gosport and Portsmouth, where the fever at first seemed to spread as slowly and to present the same mild and manageable type it now does with us, but where, within the last ten days, it has spread rapidly and assumed a malignant form. The same causes, it is said, which have produced that change there, must soon produce a similar change here. It is owing mainly, however, I think, to the quarantine regulations, by which our communication with all the cities and towns around us, and even with some of the counties to which our citizens would naturally flee, has been cut off, or rather, I ought to say, has been attempted to be cut off,—for to sever all such communication effectually, in a country like ours, is an impossibility.

New York took the lead in this matter, issuing her quarantine order on the 30th of July. Since then, almost every mail has brought us the information that one place after another — Suffolk, Richmond, Petersburg, Welden, Hampton, Washington, Baltimore—has shut us out. The counties on the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Matthews county, to which a boat runs tri-weekly from our city, are an exception to the general rule. They, instead of adopting quarantine regulations, shutting us out, have generously thrown their doors wide open, and sent us a hearty invitation to come. The Hon. Henry A. Wise, our governor-elect, I am told, has not only thrown his house open, but has actually fitted up his outhouses, so that he may accommodate as many as possible, particularly of the poor, whom the pestilence may have driven from their homes. For this I say, "God bless him!" This kindness comes to us like the summer shower to the parched field in time of uni-

versal drought—all the more precious because unexpected. Along with this shutting of us out from one place after another to which we might have turned, there has prevailed, from day to day, the report, now partly realized, that each trip of the boats regularly plying to and from our city would be their last; and thus a fear has been excited on the part of many, that, if the present opportunity of getting away was not improved, all means of flight would soon be wanting.

In these ways, a panic has been created and kept up for the last four or five days, even greater than that caused by the first announcement that the fever was among us. It has not been any appearance of present danger, so much as the idea of being shut in to grapple with the pestilence, no matter how deadly it might become,—not so much any present apprehension as the prospect of having every way of escape closed, even though our city

should become one vast charnel-house,—which has sent our people fugitives in every direction. I have said above that it was impossible, in such a country as ours, to shut out fugitives from a city by any quarantine regulations which that city may adopt. Since Baltimore has quarantined us, our citizens take the boat for the Eastern Shore in the morning, and, returning on that boat in the afternoon, enter the Baltimore boat, as from the Eastern Shore, and thus pass on unchallenged, uninterrupted; the only practical effect of the quarantine being, by giving the fugitives a whole day's exposure in crossing and recrossing the bay, to increase the likelihood of their sickening in Baltimore, if they have the poison lurking in their systems.

I have never had much opportunity of judging, by personal observation, of the danger of fugitives, such as those leaving us from day to day, spreading the yellow fever in the places into which they

may enter. But I well recollect, although then a child, that, in 1822, when the fever prevailed in New York City, great numbers of the inhabitants of the city came out to Bloomfield, New Jersey, where I was then living; and one, at the least, died of the fever there, and yet no case originated in the village. And I know, too, that during the last summer a French steamer came into our waters, with the yellow fever among her crew, and that some seventy cases were treated at the Naval Hospital, just across the river from Norfolk; and yet no one, either in the vicinity of the hospital or in our city, took the fever from them.

Speaking of these quarantine regulations, what think you of the following order adopted by the town authorities of Welden? I copy from one of our daily papers:—"Ordered—That if any person or persons shall visit the town of Welden, within fifteen days after such person or persons shall have

been in such infected cities, such person, if white, shall be fined one hundred dollars for every day he or she may remain in the town of Welden. And if a slave, the owner shall be fined fifty dollars, (if within the knowledge of the owner;) if not, *nine-and-thirty lashes on his or her bare back.* If free coloured, shall be fined fifty dollars, *or shall receive nine-and-thirty lashes.*" That is, in substance, if any poor negro, likely to have the fever in his blood, shall enter our town of Welden,—where God has laid his afflicting hand,—we'll strip to the skin and lay the lash, and then turn the fugitive out into the swamps to die. And this from a southern town, too. Verily, if I did not *know* better, I should be inclined to believe some of the "Uncle Tom" representations of southern men and southern manners. Terror must have driven the people of Welden mad when they adopted such an order as this.

And terror seems to have driven some

of our people mad, too. On yesterday morning, a poor Irishman, of the name of Stapleton, was seen to come staggering up toward the door of Dr. Constable's office, and there he fell, and, before any one could get to him, was dead. Subsequent inquiry disclosed the fact, that he had been a boarder in a boarding-house in the lower part of the city, and there had taken the fever. The family who kept the boarding-house, becoming terrified, after a day or two went off, leaving him sick in one of the upper rooms of the house, with no one to attend him, not even to give him a glass of water, and giving information to no one, in so far as can now be learned, of the utterly helpless condition in which they left him. When poor Stapleton discovered his deserted condition, as is supposed, he got up and dressed himself, and started for Dr. Constable's office, that he might obtain some relief. His strength held out until he reached the door, and there he fell and

died in the street, before any one could get to him or learn what was the matter. And what makes the case the more sad is that he is said to have many friends at home; but here—he was a stranger in a strange land. The formation of a "Howard Association" in our city was announced in our papers this morning; and surely, when such cases as this of Stapleton can occur in our midst, it is high time we had a Howard Association, or something of the kind, for the protection of the sick and suffering from the inhumanity of men mad through terror.

You will have learned through the public prints, before this letter reaches you, that Barry's Row—the row of buildings in which the fever first appeared—was burned down on the night of Tuesday last. There can be no doubt, I think, that the buildings were set on fire, though by whom, I suppose, will never be known. The alarm was given while my family were at the

tea-table, and on going to the front doo I saw at once where the fire was. I do not often go to fires, but in this instance, having a poor member of my church living in the immediate vicinity of the burning buildings, I went for the purpose of rendering her any assistance she might be in need of. On reaching the place, I found the upper end of the row fully on fire; and, I suppose, not less than three thousand persons standing as idle lookers-on. The fire-companies had their engines all there, to protect the houses around, but not a drop of water were they attempting to throw upon the burning buildings; and thus, I am told, they continued to stand until the whole row was consumed. The feeling of the crowd you will gather from this fact alone.

Judging from what I had heard during the day, this feeling was owing not to any idea that by burning these buildings the progress of the fever would be checked, but

to a report currently believed—how true the report is I cannot say, for at such a time as this it is impossible to tell what rumours are worthy of credit and what not—that after the city had been at the expense of having all the inhabitants of "the row," well and sick, removed, and had boarded up the streets in the immediate vicinity, their owner has suffered other poor families from Gosport to move in, there to take the fever, and thus become a further source of danger as well as expense to the city, and at the same time lose their own lives. This report, whether true or not, seemed to be generally believed; and the feeling of indignation which it excited caused the people to stand by, idle spectators, while the buildings were consumed.

I mention this simply for the purpose of giving you correct information respecting this occurrence, and not for the purpose of justifying the act. Even granting all that was reported to be true, it will not justify

the burning of the buildings in the way in which they were burned; and I greatly fear that some of those who stood by approving may yet have occasion to repent the countenance they have given to lawless violence. In the unprotected condition in which our city must soon be, if the fever should rage here as it is in Portsmouth now, the effect of such a precedent as this none can tell.

To-morrow has been set apart by our mayor as a day of humiliation and prayer, in prospect of the danger which now threatens us. Oh that the humiliation of our people might be like that of Nineveh, at the preaching of Jonah, so that "God might repent him of the evil which he had said that he will do unto us, and do it not"!

LETTER III.

FIRST DEATH AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—ARRIVAL OF PHYSICIANS AND NURSES FROM ABROAD—REMOVAL OF THE HOSPITAL—REPORTED FLIGHT OF THE PROTESTANT CLERGY—TRUE STATEMENT.

Thursday, Aug. 23, 1855.

THE fever is yet spreading in our city, and yesterday the first death from the fever among the members of my church occurred. Would that I could hope it would prove the last! but I cannot; for several other of our members are now extremely ill. The one that has died was my nephew, Edmund James, and he died in my house. On Saturday last we had a cold, stormy day; and, on returning from some pastoral visits, about twelve o'clock, I found that Edmund had come home sick a little while before, with all the symptoms of yellow fever—violent pains in the head and back, a yellow

infusion in the eyes, a dark coating down the middle of the tongue, while the edges of the tongue appeared almost raw, and a very rapid pulse. I procured medical aid for him at once; and, through the kindness of the Howard Association, the services of an experienced nurse also. From the first his case presented very bad symptoms, and his disease progressed steadily and rapidly to a fatal determination. On yesterday morning, about eleven o'clock, he died. Thus has our Heavenly Father taken one suddenly, in the very prime of manhood,—taken him, I trust, to that land where there is no more death. A little more than a year ago, he made a public profession of religion, connecting himself with our church; and since then his Christian walk has been witness to the sincerity of his profession. One of the last to enter among us, he is the first to be taken.

With several other young men, his companions, Edmund had taken part in watch-

ing by night with a friend, sick with typhoid fever. This friend was lying sick in a part of the city to which the infection had spread some ten days ago, as is now perfectly evident from the number of cases occurring there, although this was not thought to be so at the time. In this way it was, I think, he took the fever—and not by contagion, from any person having the disease—since every one of the young men who took part with him as watchers, during the last ten days, is now down with the fever.

Several physicians from abroad—physicians of experience in the treatment of yellow fever—have come to our relief within the last few days; and I am glad to find that those having most experience in the matter, and whose opinions therefore are entitled to most weight, do not consider it a contagious disease. This is contrary to the opinion I have always entertained —though, I must confess, my opinion on the subject has been one held without

my being able to give any good reason therefor, excepting that it was the opinion commonly current throughout the country. If they are right in this point, it is a matter of great importance that the popular belief should be corrected; for some, like poor Stapleton, whose case I mentioned in my last letter, have died in our midst, through neglect, arising altogether from fear on the part of those who would have attended to them that, by so doing, they would themselves contract the disease. On this point, I intend, should my life be spared, carefully to observe facts, that hereafter I may be able to give a reason for any opinion I shall entertain. Thus far I have seen nothing irreconcilable with the idea that yellow fever spreads through an infected atmosphere only, and not by contagion, using both these terms in their popular sense.

I mentioned above that several physicians from abroad had come to our relief. They

have not come before they were greatly needed. Several of our own physicians are away, and those that are here are overworking themselves; and one, Dr. Sylvester, has already died. In this disease, prompt attention and frequent visits from the physician, that the changing phases of the fever may be carefully noted, and threatening danger guarded against, seem to be of the utmost importance:—the difference of a few hours in procuring medical aid often making the difference between recovery and death. Careful nursing also seems to be a matter of great importance; and I am happy to say that several nurses from abroad have recently arrived, most of them employed for the present at the hospital.

The hospital has been removed from Oak-Grove to Lambert's Point, some five miles down the river. This change was made mainly for the sake of the better accommodations which could be obtained there, in the buildings belonging to the old race-

course. The new location of the hospital is at a greater distance from the city than the old, and, therefore, not as easy of access; but the disadvantages resulting from this source, it is thought, are more than made up for by the purer air which the sick will there enjoy, Lambert's Point being on a wide part of the river and fully open to the breeze. Those who have been removed there, thus far, have done much better than at Oak-Grove: a larger proportion of them having recovered, or being now decidedly convalescent. I find, however, a great prejudice existing, especially among the poor, against going to the hospital; and this owing mainly to the idea that the patients at an hospital are considered by the physicians as fit subjects to experiment upon—an idea to which the conduct of those having charge of our hospital certainly has given no countenance.

Our citizens continue still from day to day to flee, until now, I do not think that

more than one-third of our white population remain in the city. Of the coloured people but few have gone, partly on account of the difficulty of getting away, but more especially because the yellow fever is a disease from which they have, comparatively, very little to fear. In New Orleans and other southern cities, coloured people are pretty generally exempt from attacks of yellow fever. Up to this present time there have been some cases of fever among this class, in our city, and several deaths; but yet not so many as to form any very marked exception to the general rule established by the experience of cities south of us.

You are aware that most of the business of our city is done on West Main Street and the part of the city between it and the river. The infection seems now to have spread through all this part of the town; and, as a consequence, it is almost entirely deserted by our business men. Our post-

office was moved up to the Academy building on the 10th; and almost all the new advertisements which appear in our daily papers now are to the effect that such or such persons may be found at their residences, or at some place they have temporarily rented, north of Main Street, their business stand being closed for the present.

This morning I received a letter from my old friend and class-mate, Dr. Leyburn, of Philadelphia," calling my attention to a report which he tells me has been widely circulated in the papers published at a distance, —that the Protestant clergy in Norfolk and Portsmouth had all, or nearly all, deserted their posts, leaving their congregations to shift for themselves as best they could in this time of pestilence; while the Catholic clergy were nobly confronting the threatening danger, and ministering to the necessities of the sick in so far as was in their power. For two weeks past, I have been so constantly engaged in visiting the

sick and afflicted, and in helping to bury the dead, that I have not had either the time or the disposition to read the secular papers; and, until Dr. Leyburn's letter informed me of the fact, I was not aware that such a report was going the round of the papers; and even now, did I consult my own feelings, I should take no notice of it. What man may say of me appears a matter of very little moment, provided I can keep a conscience void of offence before God. Unless a miracle preserve us, when the pestilence shall have passed there will be more than one green mound in our cemetery to bear witness to the falsehood of this report respecting the Protestant clergy of Norfolk.

I have just written to Dr. Leyburn, giving him, in answer to his inquiry, a statement of the facts in this case; and as you may not have read the report referred to, I will give the same statement in substance to you. And first—that I may do justice to a faith-

ful pastor, although his course has not been called in question in this report—let me say that Rev. M. O'Keefe, the priest in charge of the only Catholic church in Norfolk, has been labouring most indefatigably among the sick, ever since the fever first appeared. As I mentioned in a former letter, the fever at first was confined almost entirely to the foreign portion of our population. Most of these were Catholics in their religious belief. To their own clergyman they naturally looked; and he, disregarding all considerations of personal danger, went promptly to them and ministered to their necessities. Thus much truth demands should be said of him; and now, justice to others requires that I add that the Protestant clergy here, when the fever extended to the Protestant portion of our population, visited the sick and ministered to them just as promptly.

We have in Norfolk, besides the Catholic church, two Episcopal, two Methodist, two

Baptist, one Methodist Protestant, and one Presbyterian church, and two churches for the coloured people, having white pastors. Dr. Minigerode, the pastor of Christ Church, the largest Episcopal church in the city, had started for Germany before the fever first appeared in Gosport, and, in all likelihood, has not yet even heard of its existence in Norfolk. His place is temporarily supplied by Rev. Lewis Walke, now labouring faithfully from day to day among the sick and dying. One of the Baptist churches is vacant, in consequence of the resignation of its pastor, some two months ago. Rev. T. G. Jones, the pastor of the other Baptist church, is now absent, I believe, on account of the state of his wife's health; and thus both the Baptist churches are without their pastors; but a young Baptist minister—Rev. Wm. C. Bagnall, a native of our city—is here, and labouring, in so far as his strength will allow, among the members of those churches and congregations.

Rev. J. G. Whitfield, the pastor of the Methodist Protestant church, (the smallest church in the city,) is at the same time president of the Virginia Conference, and required, in the discharge of his official duties, to spend the summer in visiting the churches throughout the state. The pastor of one of the coloured churches is here; whether the pastor of the other is I do not know, but I believe he is not at this time. The four remaining pastors are all here. Remembering, now, that this is the season of the year when city pastors are accustomed to leave their charges for a season, that they may recruit and be the better prepared for their more arduous duties in the winter, it seems to me that it is rather remarkable that, for ten churches, one being vacant and another temporarily vacant by previous arrangement, we should have seven ministers here, actively engaged in the discharge of ministerial duty. I will venture to say that at this present time neither Baltimore, nor Philadelphia, nor

New York, can show as full a supply for their pulpits as Norfolk can; and I will venture to say, further, that in our own city there is no one class of the population—not even the physicians, nor the undertakers—of which so large a proportion have remained at their posts, as of the clergy.

I cannot speak so particularly of others; but this I can say for myself, that shortly after our Howard Association was formed, I offered my services to them, in any way in which I, as a minister of the gospel, could be useful; and I am confident, from what I have seen of them, that the other Protestant ministers here, if they have not formally offered their services, are just as ready to render aid as I am. This I know, that on yesterday, when the extreme sickness and deatn of my nephew prevented my visiting as usual, Rev. Lewis Walke came and kindly offered to visit any sick in my congregation that I thought needed a pastoral

visit. All this I say, not boastingly, I trust, but simply to correct a false report which it seems has been widely circulated to our discredit, and, what is a matter of far graver importance, to the discredit of that Christianity which we profess. In staying, we are doing nothing but what duty plainly demands of us.

Such reports bear hardest upon those pastors who in God's providence are absent, the fact of their absence being made known without the reasons therefor, and thus the world left to infer that they have fled through unmanly, unchristian fear of the pestilence. Surely, no reasonable person can think that there may not be circumstances which render it the duty of a pastor to leave his church even in such times. Surely, no reasonable person will contend that a pastor is chained to his post, as a criminal to the stake. Christianity, true Christianity, does not aim to make its votaries—either clergy

or laity — heroes of romance, but simply *good men*—good men in all the relations of life; and I can well conceive of circumstances which would make it just as plainly my duty to leave this city as it is now my duty to remain.

LETTER IV.

EFFECTS OF COLD STORMS IN THE SPREAD OF THE FEVER —PEOPLE BEWILDERED—BURIAL OF REV. A. DIBBRELL— DEATH OF MAYOR WOODIS—AID FROM ABROAD—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HOWARD HOSPITAL.

Saturday, Sept. 1, 1855.

THE pestilence, long darkling over us, has now burst upon us in its terrible might. On Tuesday last, we had another of those chill northeasterly storms, so frequent for five or six weeks past, and although at the beginning of the week there were not over three or four hundred cases of fever in the city, there are now, I think, not less than from twelve to fifteen hundred.

I had supposed, from all I had heard and read of yellow fever in other places, that it spread most rapidly in dry, hot weather. I am certain that I have seen it spoken of, in some medical work,—although I cannot

now tell just where,—as a disease belonging to seasons of drought. This is not the case here. The present summer has been throughout what farmers call an unusually "seasonable" one; and I doubt whether a finer crop of corn was ever made, in this part of the country, than will be made this summer. We have had hot days from time to time; but, as compared with other summers, since I have been a resident of Norfolk, not so much extremely hot weather as is usual.

During dry, warm days, the fever has seemed to spread but slowly; but when these chill northeasterly storms have come, it has taken whole sections of the city in a night. During the storm occurring the early part of this week, the infection has spread through the very heart of our city; and now they are sick by households, over one-half of that portion of the city to which the fever never extended in former years. In my own congregation there are some

houses in which they are all sick; and there are many others which have suddenly been converted into hospitals—hardly enough well ones being left to attend upon the sick. Whether these cold storms ought properly to be considered the immediate agents in the spread of the infection, or whether that infection has spread during the dry, warm weather, the only effect of the cold storm being, by inducing a chill, to bring out the latent disease, I will not attempt to decide; but this is certainly true, that it is during these storms it appears to spread most rapidly. On last Tuesday night, judging from what I felt myself and from what I have since learned from others, there were very few that were not conscious of the influence of the storm. It did seem as if the flap of the wing of the unseen pestilence sent a chill to almost every heart; and the terrible consequences of this we have now before our eyes.

You have, no doubt, seen persons, when

some great calamity has come suddenly upon them,—although all is not lost, and there is yet hope, if they will exert themselves,—sitting down in a sort of sullen indifference, *bewildered*. I know not how better to describe the state of things existing among us at this time than by saying that our people seem to be bewildered; and, could you be here, and go around through the city, you would not be surprised that such was the fact.

As illustrating this state of things, I may mention an incident which occurred but a few hours ago. I had gone to attend the funeral of the Rev. A. Dibbrell, pastor of one of our Methodist churches,—a man respected and beloved in our community, and well deserving the sentiments with which he was regarded. He had fallen at his post, dying in the midst of his people. But so few of the members of his church are now here, and of this few, so many are either sick or attending upon the sick in their own families, that there

were hardly enough present to perform the ordinary offices on such an occasion; and his own son and I helped to put his coffin in the hearse.

On Thursday morning I called at a house occupied by two families, and where one in each family had been sick for several days, and, on entering, found every member of both families prostrated by the fever. Coming to the door, and seeing one of our physicians passing, I called to him, and begged him to come in and prescribe for the sick, if nothing more, and received for answer, "I have already so many cases in hand that I cannot conscientiously undertake another;" and, showing me his memorandum-book, I saw at a glance that he spoke nothing but the simple truth; and he was one of our younger physicians, having but a limited practice in ordinary times. Our older physicians, and most of those from a distance who have come to our aid, have now so much to do

that it is sometimes impossible to get a physician for hours. What we should have done had none come from abroad, I cannot tell.

On last Sabbath, Hunter Woodis, Esq., our excellent mayor, died and was buried. His loss was a loss indeed to our city. My personal acquaintance with him was but slight; but this I know, that since the fever commenced among us he has been indefatigable in the discharge of duty,—especially active in doing all that he could for the sick—never seeming to regard for a moment the personal danger to which be thus exposed himself. While he lived, although many of our public officers are away, our government had a head, and there was some one to whom we could look for guidance. His death is to us a great misfortune; for at a time like this one such man is in himself a host. Our good friend, Dr. N. C. Whitehead, as senior magistrate, now discharges the duties of

mayor; and, I need not say to one so well acquainted with him as you are, will perform the duties of that office most faithfully, in so far as it is in his power to do. But he is not the young, active man that Woodis was, and, having at the same time the duties of President of the Farmers' Bank upon him, he cannot give the time and attention to them which Woodis both could and did give.

I rejoice to learn that most of the towns and cities around us have repealed their quarantine orders, so that those who are able and disposed to flee can do so without having to take circuitous routes or depart from that straightforward honesty which Christian men should always maintain. When I saw so many going away, a few weeks ago, I felt disposed to find fault with them; and although not willing to take the responsibility of advising any to stay, I yet wished that they would for themselves decide to remain where they

were. I feel very differently now. Had all remained, and from among them a proportional number been taken sick, as undoubtedly would have been the case, I know not what we could have done. As it is, there are more sick than those who have as yet escaped—with all the aid of physicians and nurses from abroad—can properly attend to; and some are dying just for want of proper care. Had all remained, and we had three sick where there is now one, our case must have been greatly worse than it is. In the flight of those that have gone I see most clearly God's good providence; and the panic, under the influence of which they fled, I look upon as like "the sound of a great host" heard by the Assyrian army encamped before Samaria—God's means for scattering them that they might be saved.

We are beginning to receive aid, in money and provisions, from abroad also; and this help is not coming before it was

greatly needed. Our bakeries are all closed, and yesterday not a loaf of bread was to be bought; our provision-stores are almost all closed, our market pretty much deserted; and I had begun to fear that we should have great scarcity, if not famine, to contend with, as well as the pestilence. The poor were beginning really to suffer for food. The sick now suffer, in some instances, for food suited to their circumstances; and for the dead—it is becoming a matter of great difficulty to procure coffins in which to bury them. Should any thing like the same proportion die from among those now sick which have died hitherto, I fear we shall be driven to the necessity of burying in pits, as has been done in New Orleans, and as was done during the great plague in London. May God preserve us from a necessity so revolting to the feelings of the friends of those that die!

I have mentioned the death of Rev. A.

Dibbrell. Rev. J. Wills, and Rev. S. W. Jones, the other ministers of the Methodist church, stationed here, are now both down with the fever, the latter thought to be dangerously ill. Rev. M. O'Keefe, the Catholic priest, is also sick. In my own family I have now another case. My eldest daughter, Mary, was attacked on Wednesday, but her case, thus far, seems to be a mild and manageable one, and I hope the crisis has been passed. She was just recovering from a slight attack of bilious fever; and I had thought that this, or rather the cleansing of the system by the medicine she had taken, would have served as a protection against yellow fever. Instead of this, it seems to have laid the system more fully open to attack.

I wrote you, in my last, that the temporary hospital, established at Oak Grove, had been abandoned, in order that we might avail ourselves of the better and more extensive accommodations furnished

by the buildings at Lambert's Point. During the last few days, the number of the sick has increased so rapidly that it is found impossible to remove them to Lambert's Point; and the building known as the "City Hotel," in the very centre of the city, has been taken, and fitted up as an hospital, under the direction of the Howard Association. On Thursday (Aug. 29) the sick began to be carried thither. This new hospital, extensive as are its accommodations, is fast filling up; and what other measures we may yet be compelled to adopt, God only knows.

LETTER V.

A PASTOR'S SABBATH IN A PLAGUE-STRICKEN CITY.

Sabbath, Sept. 2.

THIS has been a terrible day in our city, and I have witnessed such scenes as, I pray God, I may never be called to see again. 'Tis the fifth day after the cold storm mentioned in my letter of yesterday; the disease has had time to run its ordinary course, (for it is on the fifth or seventh day that death from the fever is most common,) and the great Reaper has begun to bind and carry home his sheaves to-day —literally his *sheaves*,—for it is not here and there one that has been taken, but the dead and the dying are in every quarter. All day have I been going from one scene of affliction to another, and now, though tired in body, I cannot sleep; and, as some-

times the overburdened spirit finds relief in such a way, I will employ this waking hour in writing to you.

Never before had I an idea of what a pastor might be called to do and to witness in a plague-stricken city. Let me take you with me, not to all the houses I have visited to-day; I will not take you out of my own congregation; and even then I will ask you to go with me to such houses only as, within the last week, have been converted into hospitals. And, as we proceed, remember that mine is but one out of nine congregations, (including the Catholic,) and what you see here must be repeated nine times over, if you would have an idea of what is really taking place around you.

We will stop first here, near the main street. A widowed mother and two of her children, all victims of the fever, have been buried from this house within the last ten days, while the three remaining

children of that family, all apparently convalescent, were on yesterday removed to the house of an uncle, in another part of the city. In the upper story, there is a maiden lady, with the three orphan children of a deceased sister, living—or rather, they were living yesterday, but all down with the fever, and the lady, Miss E. F. H., seemed then extremely ill. Can any thing be done for them to-day? Let us enter and see. The children are all better, but the aunt is breathing her last; the physical agony of death has passed, and life is going out like the flickering candle in its socket. A sister has stolen away from her own sick son and daughter, that she may close her eyes; and a nurse, sent by our kind neighbours of Charleston, is there also. All we can do here is to go and secure for her a coffin. She told me, when I called yesterday, that she had no expectation of recovery, but death had no terrors for her.

Let us enter another door, not far from

our church. Here, too, there are two families living in the same house, and all of both families have the fever. This is the house of which I have told you that, a few days ago, I stood at the door and begged a passing physician to come in and prescribe for the sick, but begged in vain; not that the physician was not willing to come, but because he had already more cases in hand than he could properly attend to. I afterward succeeded in getting a physician from Savannah, who had just arrived, to visit them; and since then he has been both doctor and nurse for all the sick in the house. The mother, in each family, has now so far recovered as to be able to help the others a little. Provisions, sent from Baltimore, have been supplied them by the Howard Association. Can we do any thing for them? All seem to be on the mend; and what is most needed is some chicken-broth, for those who are beginning to feel like eating again. But how shall it be got for them? The soup-

house of the Howard Association is on Market Square, and there is no one here that can go for them. An elder of our church took their pitcher and brought the soup to them yesterday, but he is by the bedside of a dying brother now. I must get it for them to-day.

We will stop now at the house of Mr. J. A request was sent me this morning that I would call there if I could. There have been several cases of fever in this house for some days past, but all apparently yielding to medical treatment excepting that of Mrs. J., who is now said to be near her end. Hers has seemed to me a strange case from the first —little or no apparent fever, but an entire giving way of the nervous system. Those around her were at first disposed to think that she was suffering rather from ordinary nervousness than from yellow fever. She does not seem ill to-day, and yet her physician, who has come from New Orleans, and made this disease his study, tells me she

will be dead before to-morrow morning. Mrs. J. has been hard of hearing for several years, and this disease has made her perfectly deaf. A warm-hearted Christian woman she is. She gives me a smile of recognition, and stretches out to me her quivering hand. She speaks; there is something unearthly in the sound of her voice; its tone is hollow and yet strangely sweet. She is evidently in her right mind, but she speaks of herself as the third person. "She expected from the time the fever appeared in Norfolk that she would die of it. She had wished to live a few years longer for her husband's and her children's sake, but God's will be done. Her prayer was that God would do with her and hers as seemed to him good." Can it be that she is so near her end? If so, this is a phase of the disease that is new to me. Should she be taken, our church will lose in her a praying member. But why detain her? she is ripe for heaven.

The hour for morning service has arrived. Two of our churches are open to-day—one of the Episcopal churches, and my own. A mere handful have come up to the Lord's house; and yet—blessed be God!—enough to claim the Master's presence on his own terms: "Where *two or three* are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The congregation all come forward and occupy some eight or nine pews immediately in front of the pulpit; and it seems fitting the occasion that the preacher should quit the pulpit and stand in their midst. Our sick and afflicted ones are remembered in our prayers; our absent ones are not forgotten; and it is cheering to think that many a fervent prayer is offered by them in our behalf; that, though absent from us in body, in spirit they are with us, and their prayer and ours is one—that God would say to this wasting pestilence, "It is enough." A congregation of twenty-seven persons (for this was the num-

ber in our church to-day) in one of the three largest Presbyterian churches in Virginia! And yet, in so far as I know, all our people were there who could be; those not there are far away, or they are sick, or with the sick, or they are dead. A mere handful we were, but it was good to be there. Who, of this small number, shall come up to God's house on next Sabbath morning, if there be a congregation gathered here, I cannot tell. It may be all—it may be none of us. But then there is a more glorious sanctuary, and a holier, sweeter sanctuary worship than this, to which, through God's grace, we may look forward when we have done with the Sabbaths of earth.

Having rested for a little season now, let us visit the house of Mr. S. When last there, on Friday evening, there were five of the children down with the fever, and, although two of them were very sick, they did not appear to be in any immediate danger, and the mother and three other

children were there to nurse them. We enter. The mother and another child were taken down yesterday, and the mother's case seems to be rather a threatening one. But "God is with her of a truth," blessed be his name! The eldest daughter has had the "black vomit" for several hours. Can it be that she is to die? She says that she does not suffer, and her mind seems clear and her spirit composed. She has been a member of the church for several years; and her regular attendance in the sanctuary, and in the prayer-meeting, and in the Sabbath-school, has borne witness that her heart was in the service which she rendered God. She is in the hands of her Heavenly Father, and there must we leave her; and to no better hands can we commit those we love. The other sick ones all appear to be doing well. Here let us kneel, midway between the three rooms in which the sick are lying, that all may hear and join in the prayer. How solemn a thing it is to pray in such

circumstances! Whether we shall all unite in prayer again on earth God only knows.

Passing around the corner of the street, here, in this house just before us, there were five sick with the fever yesterday. There were well ones there then, to nurse the sick, but nearly worn out by the exertions they had been compelled to make. A lady from Washington, who has kindly come on as a nurse, is with them to-day. The sick ones are not arranged as they were yesterday. Why is this? Those most ill have been placed in a room by themselves; that, if they die, (and there is reason to fear that one at least will,) their death-struggles may not excite and thus do harm to those who seem to be recovering. There is great mercy in thus "sorting out" the sick at such a time as this. There is reason to fear that one of these two placed here together will die. Ida, the elder, seemed to be doing well yesterday; but last night she suddenly started up from her

troubled sleep, and, before any one could get to her, sprang from the bed, and ran screaming down the stairs and to the front door. Here she was overtaken, and brought back to bed again; but the shock her nervous system received is likely to prove fatal. The account she gives of the matter is that in her sleep she dreamed that some frightful monster was just about to seize her, when she sprang from her bed and ran. In a disease which affects the nervous system as the yellow fever does, such cases as this are to be expected, and, on account of their fatal consequences, need to be very carefully guarded against. With the exception of Ida, the sick here seem to be in no immediate danger.

Going along this street to the head of it, let us visit Mr. B's. Two of the children had the fever yesterday, and when I saw them I had but little hope that either of them would recover. We enter the house; —no one thinks of bell or knocker now.

A fierce watch-dog lies across the passage, and yet, strange to say, there seems to be a spell upon him, and he meets us as a friend. Hark! that was a fearful scream! The spell on the watch-dog's spirit is explained; for dogs seem to understand by instinct such sounds as this. We ascend the stairs. Here, in this room, lies Eugene, just breathing his last. In his agony he has ruptured a blood-vessel; and now his pale white arm is in strong contrast with the blood-stained pillow on which it lies. Yesterday he was in his senses, and I had a very pleasant talk with him about Jesus and his love for children. He told me then that he thought he loved Jesus, and I trust he did. He is perfectly insensible and cold at the extremities now. The scream we heard was from his sister, in the next room—a raving maniac in the paroxysm of her fever. Her heart-stricken mother can hardly hold her. It is a little more than a year since Florence took her stand among the disciples of Jesus; and

she promised to make a useful member of the church. Should she be taken—and I think she will be dead before morning—she will be the third of those then gathered in that have now been gathered home. A nurse is with the mother. But where is the father? Down with the fever, in another part of the house, and with the disease showing the same terrible symptoms it has in the case of his children. What can we do for this household? I know not, but to assist in having Mr. B. removed to the hospital, and to secure a coffin for Eugene. Florence will probably not need hers before morning.

The sun is just setting; and this is the hour I promised to attend the funeral—if funeral our burial-service now may be called—of Miss Helen W. The case of this family is sad indeed. Captain S., Miss Helen's brother-in-law, returned from a three years' naval cruise but a few weeks ago. The family consisted of Captain and Mrs. S.,

Miss Helen, four children at home, and one away, at sea. About ten days ago Captain S. died; a few days later, his wife; then the eldest daughter, and now Miss Helen; and the two younger children are lying extremely ill. When I called last evening to see Miss Helen, she did not seem to be suffering in body at all; and knowing that she had been subject, for years, to occasional seasons of great depression of spirits, I thought that it was possibly as much depression of spirits as yellow fever she was suffering from then; and, seeing the condition of the children, I urged her to arouse herself, for their sakes. She told me then that she would get up in the morning. When morning came, she was a corpse; and now we are here for her burial. Mr. and Mrs. G., relatives of the family, are here to do what they can for them; and they, Wm. S., two men who have come with the hearse, and ourselves, are the congregation assembled for the fu-

neral. No carriage accompanies the hearse, for none can be obtained; and we must do as we can and not as we would now. The coffin is brought down. We stop with it a few moments in the hall, while a brief prayer is offered; and then, placing it in the hearse, it is driven off to the cemetery at a rapid pace. Wm. S., that he may see his aunt's body laid with those of the family, mounts the hearse-box with the driver, and they are soon lost to view. Such are many of our funerals in this time of pestilence. Four out of seven have now been buried from this household; and two more, I fear, must shortly be added to the number of the dead. May we not call this a family removal from this, their last year's residence, to the cemetery?

One other call we must make, before returning home for the night. In the house we are entering, the husband, Mr. H., was extremely ill this morning; and there was little or no hope of his recovery. The chil-

dren, through God's good providence, were all away when the fever began to spread in the city, and have not been suffered to return. There are now four of the family here—Mr. H., a niece who has had a slight attack of fever and is recovering, Mrs. H., who was so ill ten days ago that I little thought she would now be numbered among the living, (she is better, and, although feeble, she sits watching by the bedside of her dying husband,) and her father, an old man. He seems overcome by the threatening calamity. Mr. H. yet breathes, but the death-damp is gathering on his forehead, and he must soon be gone. "*Can you get some one to help us lay him out?*" And is this all that can be done for them? It is even so. No question I have heard to-day has struck so sadly upon my ear, heard where it is, as this; for to me it tells of the terrible "destruction" now wasting us. I do not believe that a family could be found in the city who have more uniformly

and constantly "visited the sick in their afflictions" than this; and at any other time many a one would have been present, brought hither by the grateful remembrance of kindness done, to render every aid which man can render to the sick and dying. But now, so terribly does the pestilence prevail that even in this house the question is heard at the bedside of the dying—"Can you get some one to help us lay him out?"—"All our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord?"

LETTER VI.

THE CRISIS OF THE EPIDEMIC—FRIGHTFUL MORTALITY—BURYING IN PITS—A BURIAL IN A PLAGUE-STRICKEN CITY—APPEARANCE OF THE CEMETERY—APPEARANCE OF THE HARBOUR—CASES OF ROBBERY—CHARACTER OF NURSES FROM ABROAD.

Thursday, Sept. 6.

THE fever continues to rage with unabated violence. The exact number of deaths, daily, I cannot tell; but it will not take many weeks of such pestilence as this to leave our city without inhabitants. On carefully looking over our church roll, on the first of this month, I found that we had just eighty-seven of our communicants then in the city. Out of this number, *ten* died during the first three days of this week. I have heard and read of cities decimated during a season of pestilence; but here is more than a decimation in three

days. Through God's good providence, two-thirds of our church members are away, beyond the range of the fever which is wasting us. It may be that this is God's plan for preserving us "a seed alive in the earth."

Walking with a friend yesterday, he remarked, "The verse of an old hymn has been constantly running in my mind for the last day or two:—

> "'One army of the living God,
> To his commands we bow;
> *Part of the host have cross'd the flood,*
> *And part are crossing now.*'"

Certainly no words could more accurately describe our case then these. Had I not God's own assurance that the church was ever his care, and did I not know that his church on earth was established, in the first instance, simply as a training-school for the church above, I should be ready to say, with Jacob, "All these things are against me."

I have just returned from the burial of a

young man, a member of my church, whose death was an exceedingly painful one, in so far as the body was concerned. When first taken, he seemed to be slightly attacked, and in the course of five or six days was up and walking about his room. In this condition he ate imprudently, and thus brought on a relapse. After the fever returned upon him, it was found impossible to break it again; and yesterday the blood actually oozed through the skin, on different parts of his body, before he died. As a general thing, death by yellow fever seems to be rather an easy one; but occasionally cases occur, like this, where the death-struggle is terrible.

I said above that I could not tell the exact number of deaths now occurring daily. It is commonly reported at about eighty; but this I know must be below the real number. On yesterday, between four and five o'clock, P. M., I accompanied a corpse to the cemetery, and seeing a large

number of coffins lying in different parts of the ground, awaiting interment, I asked the principal grave-digger the number of graves then ordered in the city cemeteries for the day. He replied, "Forty-three." Passing on to the Potters' Field, I saw two piles of coffins and rough boxes, such as we are compelled to substitute for coffins in many instances now, piled up like cord-wood, as high as a man could conveniently reach to pile them; while close by, men were busy in digging a pit in which to cover them up from sight. I did not count them, but the person having charge of the matter said there were upward of forty in all. Now, besides these, several coloured persons had been buried that day; one under my own eyes, where friends went along and dug the grave after the corpse was carried to the ground. We have, then, for that day, in the city cemeteries and in the Potters' Field, not less than ninety burials; and this does not include the interments in the Catholic

burial-ground, which is distinct from the city cemeteries; and I do not know the number buried there. And this before five o'clock in the afternoon; while for a week past they have continued to carry out and bury the dead until nine or ten o'clock at night. On such ground as this it is I say the number of deaths must be much greater than the published estimate.

Burying the dead in pits, if burial it can be called, and in many an instance with nothing but a rough box to surround the body—to this has stern necessity driven us. And even this is not the worst; the boxes used have generally but one body placed in them, and yet this is not always the case; in one instance I know that four bodies were crowded into a single box; and one of the most active members of the Howard Association told me, that, a few nights ago, the supply of coffins and boxes having given out, he helped to bury eight corpses just tied up in the blankets in which the persons

had died. Thus are the dead carried out to the Potters' Field, sometimes in furniture-wagons, sometimes in carts, sometimes upon drays; and there, placed layer upon layer in *the pits*, they rest, until the morning of the resurrection. You know our people too well to think that this arises from any want of a disposition to show a proper respect for the dead, or from any lack of those feelings of our common humanity which are shocked at such a course. It is a stern necessity which compels us to do as we are doing; for thus only can we keep the tainted air from becoming so deeply infected that none shall be left to bury our dead; thus only can we keep pace with death in his rapid strides. The "great Reaper,"—surely this is his harvest season; and the living toil and sweat in binding and carrying home the sheaves after his sickle.

We have burials, but no funerals, now. And that you may know just how our

burials are performed, let me take you with me to one to-day. By the exertion of friends two carriages have been secured to accompany the hearse. We enter one of them, and are driven off rapidly toward the house where the corpse is lying. We stop a short distance from the door. It is the mother we are to bury; and the daughter is now so extremely ill that they dare not let her know that her mother lies dead in the very next room to herself; and this is the reason why the hearse and carriages are not suffered to come up to the door. Enough are present to carry the coffin to the hearse; and now that it has been placed there, we drive off, hearse and carriages, at the same rapid pace at which we were driven hither. The principal grave-digger opens the cemetery gate; but instead of silently pointing us to the grave, as in ordinary times, or inquiring in a whisper the name of the deceased, and then, in the same tone, giving us our directions, as he did ten days

ago, he now asks, in very much the style of the challenge given by a sentry on guard, "Who's this?" and when the answer is given, we are told which way to direct our course. Arrived at the lot belonging to the family, we find no grave dug there as yet; so many graves have been ordered to-day, that, with all the help that can be hired to labour at grave-digging, it is impossible the orders should be promptly attended to. The hearse cannot wait; the carriages cannot wait; all we can do is to deposit the coffin where the grave is to be dug, and, offering a short prayer, there leave it, to take its turn at the hands of the over-tasked grave-diggers.

Before we quit the cemetery, stand here and look around you. This is September, —the season of the year when in ordinary times every thing looks green in this place, and under the shade of these old cedars a quiet reigns which well becomes a cemetery —*a resting-place* for the dead. But now there are labourers toiling in every part of

the ground, and the sound of the shovel of the grave-digger is heard on every side, even while our little company stood for a few moments uncovered for prayer. "God's-acre" has the appearance of a ploughed field. Instead of a resting-place for the dead, the cemetery looks more like a camping-ground being got ready for a coming host of the living. The city and the cemetery have exchanged characters. The latter now wears the busy aspect which belongs of right to the former; and almost the silence of death reigns in the deserted streets.

Returning from the cemetery, let us take our way to the drawbridge, that from thence we may have a full view of the harbour, and of what, a few weeks ago, was the business part of the city. As we pass along, notice these flies collected about the doors and windows of almost every house we pass. This is said to be the plague-fly, and its coming is thought to mark the crisis

of the epidemic. I first noticed it about a week ago; and since then the pestilence might well be called "the destruction which wasteth at noonday." Here, in this house on our left, we made our last visit together, on Sabbath night. Mr. H. died shortly after we left the house. His father-in-law followed his corpse to the cemetery on Monday evening, and, returning home with a chill upon him, died and was buried on yesterday. So rapidly does this fever, in some instances, do its work. God help the heart-stricken one from whom He has, almost at one and the same time, taken both father and husband!

Now that we are out upon the drawbridge, look along the water-front of the city. Wharves and warehouses, with the names of occupants painted in large letters upon their fronts, all appear as usual, saving that their doors and windows are closed, and there is no living thing to be seen about them. The names painted there

will, many of them, if they are to give true directions, soon have to be blotted out, and graven, instead, upon the sign-stones in the "city of the dead." But look along the wharves, where at every season of the year there are many vessels lying, and in the winter and early spring they often line the wharf-heads five and six deep. There is not now one single vessel to be seen afloat, from the drawbridge to Town-Point. There are the two slender masts of a fishing-smack sunken in the county dock; and here, in this shipyard, there is a vessel drawn up as if for repairs; but there is no shipwright at work upon her. There is a plank half fastened to her side; but the hand that placed it there "shall not have any more a portion forever in any thing that is done under the sun." The only boat which enters our harbour now is the little steamer, J. E. Coffee, run to meet the boats from Baltimore and Richmond in Hampton Roads. By her our mails are

carried and all our commerce done. Yesterday she came in with her whole deck piled with empty coffins; and coffins for the dead are one main article of import now, more needed, more sought after, than any other article offered in our market. I have seen furniture-wagons drive rapidly hither and thither through the city, of late, and the only article of furniture they have carried home has been coffins. I looked over the day-book of one of our principal furniture-dealers, yesterday; and, all down the page, there was no charge but the oft-repeated one of "A coffin;"—"a coffin." Poor, desolate Norfolk! The coming of a ship into her harbour to-day would cause almost as much surprise to the beholder as did the coming of the ship whose hull first rippled the surface of her waters to the Indian who then dwelt here. The sun shines as brightly, and the sea-breeze seems as balmy, as at other times; and yet this, one of the finest harbours on the Atlantic

seaboard,—the unseen pestilence has made it to be shunned by the mariner, more than if it were full of quicksands and sunken rocks.

And now, having witnessed something of the desolation which has settled down on our plague-stricken city, let me tell you of troubles of another kind, which have, very unexpectedly to me, come upon us. A man by the name of Isaac Marks came here a short time ago as a nurse, and so won the confidence of those in authority that the City Hospital was put under his supervision. This man has been detected in robbing the dying, has confessed his crime, and has pointed out the place where he concealed his plunder. One would think that persons coming to such a city as ours now is would be possessed of pure and holy motives; or, at the least, that the sight of our sorrows would move the heart of the most hardened villain to pity, and, even though he might have come with intent to

curse, cause him to stay that he might bless us. It is not so. "The love of money is the root of all evil;" and there are men from whose hearts it has blotted out every trace of a better humanity.

The way in which this robbery committed by Marks has been found out is worthy of record. He was acting as nurse in a family living next door to the hospital, and where the pestilence has swept away father and mother, and child after child, until, out of a family of eleven, only three, I believe, remain. These were all sick, and the elder, a boy about fourteen years old, was thought to be dying. When taken sick, this boy had placed under his pillow the key of a trunk containing jewelry and other articles of value given him by his father before his death. Marks knew where this key was; and, supposing the boy to be too far gone to take notice of what he did, possessed himself of the key, and thus of the valuables contained in the trunk. Contrary to all ex-

pectation, this boy is now recovering, and has given the information which led to the detection of the robbery.

It is painful to know that such cases as this can occur, and to feel that while watching with the sick you have to guard against the robber; and yet this is not the only instance of the kind which has occurred among us. A few days ago, I was accosted in the street by a stranger, so drunk that he could hardly stand, who told me that he had letters of introduction to me from a friend in Richmond, and asked me to get him a place as a nurse in some family needing such services. He did not show me any letters, nor do I believe that he had any; for, great as is the want of integrity manifested by thoughtless men in giving letters of recommendation, I do not believe that any one would recommend a drunkard as a nurse in yellow fever. Knowing how useless it was to reason with or to attempt to reprove a drunken man, I turned from

him, simply warning him to quit the city as soon as he could find the means of getting away. I learned the next day that this man had come here, and, by his plausible representations, had succeeded in getting a place as nurse in a family where all were down with the fever; and there, having robbed the young man whose special nurse he was, had then made himself drunk with the brandy ordered by the physician for his patient, and in this condition had left the house and come to me.

You may ask, where is our city government, when such occurrences as these can be suffered to take place, and yet the criminal escape the punishment he deserves? I wrote you, some time ago, that Woodis, our mayor, was dead. I have now to add that Dr. Whitehead, our acting mayor, is down with the fever. His case does not seem, to-day, a very threatening one; and yet God only knows how it will terminate. And so with almost every one of our city

officers that remained with us. They are now numbered either with the sick or the dead; and those of our citizens who have thus far escaped have no heart to punish even the criminal.

Do not infer, however, from the cases just mentioned, the general character of those who have come among us from abroad to act as nurses. Those sent us by the Howard Associations in our southern cities (and I find them now in very many houses) are careful and attentive, and seem to have been selected with great judgment by those who sent them. So, too, with the Sisters of Charity, several of whom have come hither from abroad and are now with us. And among the volunteer nurses acting under the direction of our Howard Association there are many worthy of all praise. And their coming was a blessing indeed to us; and many a life has been saved through their unwearied exertions.

LETTER VII.

THE PESTILENCE ABATING—DEATH OF MISS ELIZA SOUTTER SCENE AT THE POST-OFFICE—PROPOSAL TO REMOVE THE PEOPLE TO OLD POINT.

Wednesday, Sept. 12.

THE pestilence is evidently abating in violence, the number of deaths daily being now not much more than half what it was ten days ago. And yet I feel sad today; more sad, I believe, than I have felt any day since the pestilence first appeared. This may be in part owing to physcal causes; for neuralgic pains in my face have broken my rest for several nights past, and this and depression of spirits often go hand-in-hand in this world of ours, the willing spirit suffering under the weakness of the flesh.

This sadness is not, however, owing altogether to the body. I have had to-day one

of the most painful acts in my pastoral life to perform; and that was to follow to the grave the remains of our dear friend, Eliza Soutter. It ought not to have been a saddening act to me, I know; and, had I but the faith to look above and beyond these present scenes, and to trust unquestioningly the interests of Zion in the hands of Zion's God, it would not so appear. At the grave of one in whose death we have no hope, tears well may flow, but not at that of one who "sleeps in Jesus." I recollect once to have read of an old Scotch minister—in those times of persecution when God's people, "of whom the world was not worthy," were hunted like wild beasts—who used to pray, "Lord, spare the green and take the ripe." Oh that I had faith thus to pray! but the ripest for heaven seem, to mortal sense, the very ones we can most illy spare from the Church on earth. I do not know that I have ever met with a Christian whose character ex-

hibited more of symmetry,—a character in which the lovelier graces were more duly attempered with Christian frankness and integrity,—than the one I have followed to the grave to-day. For the last two weeks I have been called so regularly, every day, to bury some one or more of the members of my church, that I now find myself, on awaking in the morning, asking myself the question—Whom have I to bury to-day? And, from closely noticing the symptoms of this fever, I can generally answer the question, at least in part, without a prompter. When I saw our dear friend on yesterday, I knew that she was in a dying state; and the first thought that occurred this morning was, "I must help to bury her to-day." And yet, when the announcement came that she was dead, it seemed to me I could hardly believe it—so much, and often insensibly too, do our wishes control and overbear the decisions of the judgment. She is in the grave now; no: *she* is not in the grave,—the

body alone is there; the spirit, the ransomed spirit, I doubt not, "hath immediately passed into glory." In her last hours, and ere reason was dethroned, Christ, and the glorious fulness and perfection of his gospel, seemed to engage her thoughts. Well, no longer does she see Him whom she hath loved "through a glass, darkly—but face to face." I heard the remark quoted, some weeks ago, as that of an eminent physician, "Beware the Parthian arrows of the pestilence!" It made but little impression when first I heard it; I shall long remember it now. The Parthian arrows of the pestilence are striking down some of the noblest and loveliest among us.

I was at the post-office to-day shortly after the mail arrived, and the scene which met my eye, as contrasted with what it was a month ago, was truly affecting. When the post-office was first removed from Commerce Street to the Academy Building,

it used to be a place of general meeting for our people; and at the time the mails were due, a crowd would collect in the ample porch and on the steps of the building, while in the yard, and especially in the shade, there were always boys playing marbles, or engaged in some other sport, and this with all the characteristic thoughtlessness and hilarity of youth. Here we met, and inquiries were made and answered respecting friends and acquaintances in different parts of the city; and companionship in trial made us sociable, so that those who before had known each other by sight only now met almost as old friends. Thus, even after a general gloom had spread itself over every other part of the city, here was a spot which yet wore a busy, cheerful aspect. All is changed now. To-day I saw no boys playing around, no crowd collected in the porch; but, one by one, men with sad countenances came, and, receiving their letters and papers, turned

and went away again, one hardly having the heart to speak to another. While connected with the college in Lexington, I used at one time regularly to take my morning walk through a small piece of wood not far from the college buildings. One season a covey of partridges selected this wood as their feeding-ground. Here my approach would often start them up, and with a great fluttering of wing they would scatter in every direction. But the hunter found them out, and every day one or more of them would fall before his deadly aim, until the whole flock disappeared. In the early winter I would occasionally startle a single partridge from the old feeding-ground—one, I suppose, left alone of all that used to congregate there. I know not how often the thought has occurred to my mind, in the last few days, that such as was the history of this hunted flock, such will be that of the crowd that, a month ago, used to collect at our post-office.

I wrote you in my last that Dr. Whitehead, our acting mayor, was down with the fever. He is now so far recovered as to be sitting up again; but a sore affliction has befallen him, in the death of his only daughter, and, indeed, his only child, that remained at home unmarried. A member of my church she was, and, although many years younger than Eliza Soutter, she gave promise of much of the same excellence of Christian character which has made her death so great a loss to us. "Passing away" seems to have been written by the finger of God, as a motto, upon the standard around which the Captain of our salvation has marshalled our little band.

I learn from the papers, and from private letters too, that our friends at a distance are talking of the propriety of the removal of our people in a body to Old Point, or to some other place beyond the reach of the deadly epidemic prevailing here. Perhaps some lives might be saved by such a course;

but the thing is in itself impossible. Not that we are so numerous now that the means of transportation could not be found; it would not take many boats to remove us all to Old Point in a day or two. But there are the sick and the dying in almost every family, and these in a condition which places their removal out of the question; and those yet well cannot leave the sick. Our case is like that of the detachment of a retreating army to whose care the wounded have been confided. The enemy is closely pressing upon them, and word is sent them from those at a distance, who see naught but the danger in which this detachment is, "Flee—flee for your lives!" "But what of our wounded companions, who cannot flee? we are moving as rapidly as we can, and carry them with us." And word comes yet again—"Flee! leave the wounded, if you must; there will be less sacrifice of life if they are all left to die, and you save yourselves by flight, than if you stay at the risk

of perishing with them, while the enemy is pressing so closely upon you." "This may all be true; but the wounded are our brethren,—those who have fought side by side with us in many a battle,—those who would never have deserted us had we been the wounded and they the whole. Flee we cannot. We can die with them, if God's will be so, but never leave them.

LETTER VIII.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE FEVER—UNFULFILLED PRESENTIMENT OF DEATH—PROPOSED DEPARTURE FROM NORFOLK.

Wednesday, Sept. 19, 1855.

JUST a week has elapsed since last I wrote you, and yet it seems to me an age. That I should have the fever, and possibly, perhaps I ought to say probably, die under its attack, has for weeks past entered into all my calculations, when I have thought upon the subject at all; and yet, I can truly say, this prospect has caused me no anxious thought. When will we Christians learn to exercise faith commensurate with the fulness of God's precious promise—"as thy day so shall thy strength be"? for it is to his sustaining grace alone I can attribute the quiet I have enjoyed.

The very night after my last letter was

written, the fever did attack me; and to-day, for the first time, I am sitting up for a little while, although I find myself weak as a child. In several of my letters I have had occasion to speak of the character and symptoms of this disease as they present themselves to a bystander; I can now speak of them as they present themselves in one's personal experience; or, if I may be allowed the use of the figure, I have attempted to exhibit to you the mode of attack and to expose the wiles of the enemy as they might be learned by a looker-on. I can now speak of them as learned in a personal encounter.

The fever prevailing here has seemed to change its type, at least in so far as its most obvious symptoms are concerned, and this more than once since its appearance among us. In almost all the cases I saw several weeks ago, an intense burning sensation in the pit of the stomach, aggravated by almost every thing which the patient would swal-

low, especially the stimulants which were given as the fever passed off, was the symptom chiefly complained of by the sufferer. I recollect the Rev. A. Dibbrell's remarking to me, the last time I saw him before his death, that he never had felt the force of the Scriptural expression, "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched," so much as while suffering from this fever. Of late I have heard very few complain much of this burning sensation; and in my own case, although I suffered to some extent in this way—enough to lead me to think that the stomach was in an exceedingly irritated condition, yet not to such an extent as to make it, in the retrospect, a marked characteristic of the disease.

Very much the same remarks might be made respecting the intense pain in the head and the back of which almost every one complained, when first attacked, in the earlier stages of the epidemic. Some pain in the head and back I did suffer at first,

but these were speedily relieved by the application of a plaster, made of equal parts of cayenne pepper and flour, to the spine.

A few weeks ago almost every case commenced with a distinct, and sometimes protracted, chill. Of late, in many an instance, the person attacked is conscious of no distinct chill. In my own case, it would be difficult to say just when the attack commenced. When writing my last letter to you, I was conscious of an unusual nervous irritability, and walked the floor of my room for several hours after finishing it, suffering from what I thought neuralgic pains in my face. Such pains had broken my rest almost every night for the week then past; and when, after a few hours of unrefreshing slumber, I awoke, the next morning, with a dull pain in the head and a slightly feverish condition of the whole body, I was disposed to attribute this to my loss of rest, and after breakfast went out, as usual, to visit the sick and to take

part in burying the dead. After following a corpse to the cemetery at ten o'clock, I found myself so much indisposed that I returned home, and in the course of an hour went to bed. Even then I was hardly willing to admit to myself that this was the beginning of the fever; yet such it soon proved to be.

The main characteristic of the fever, as it now presents itself to me, is a terrible nervous restlessness, which increased as the disease progressed toward its crisis, and of which I am yet by no means free. You may think that I am using a very strong expression when I call this a *terrible* nervous restlessness; yet no other words will convey just the impression which it has left upon my memory. My feelings during the whole of Saturday night, when this affection was at its height, I do not know that I can describe; or rather, I ought to say, I know that I cannot describe in language. I can perhaps give you the best

idea of it by simply noting the fact that during that long, *long* night, as it seemed to me, the following changes were gone through with about every ten minutes First, awaking with a nervous irritability, such that it was only with the utmost effort I could lie still, or keep the bedclothes upon me. I well knew, and the thought was constantly before my mind, that my life depended, in so far as second causes were concerned, upon keeping quiet and covered up, so that the gentle perspiration in which I was should not be checked; and yet, as this restlessness increased, it seemed to me that I had rather die than lie still; and this, although I would reason with myself as a Christian, and a husband and father with a family dependent upon him. Then, this restlessness, increasing, would become absolutely irresistible in the course of five or six minutes; (I had caused a lamp to be placed so as to throw its light upon a clock on the mantel, that

I might mark the passage of time, and I therefore say, "five or six minutes," although the time often seemed to me a full hour;) when, taking a small piece of ice in my mouth, I would yield for the moment to my restlessness, and, throwing myself over in the bed, drop to sleep for a minute or two, to awake and go through precisely the same changes during the next ten minutes.

Several weeks ago, I sat by the bedside of a young man, in the crisis of his fever, who would throw the bedclothes off him every few minutes. I tried to persuade him to control himself in this particular; when he asked me, in a tone and with a look which showed that the question was asked in all seriousness, "What think you will be the consequence if I do not keep covered up?" As his case was then a very critical one, I replied, "Unless you can be kept covered you will certainly die." "Well, die I must, then," said he, and with a single

effort threw all the clothes off him again. I did not understand his feelings then. I do now. On account of this nervous restlessness it is, in part at least, that the constant attention of a careful nurse is so important.

This restlessness has been to me one of the most marked characteristics of the fever in most of the fatal cases which I have seen,—a nervous irritability which even the stupor preceding death does not overcome; for I have seen the dying man throwing his head from side to side upon the pillow, even after all the organs of sense had ceased their office. I will not attempt to discuss the nature of yellow fever—that I leave to the physician; but, taking this nervous irritability as an index of the progress of the disease, (and this it certainly seemed to me to be, in very many instances,) I would simply record the fact that any thing which increased the irritation of the stomach or checked the perspiration seemed always to

increase it. And hence I would infer—first, that as gentle medicines as possible should be used to act upon the stomach and bowels; in my case, a dose of castor oil, followed in the course of two hours by enemas of oil and warm water, were the only medicines used to act on the stomach. And, second, that moderate perspiration (not excessive, lest it weaken the patient too much in this wonderfully prostrating disease) should be produced as soon after the commencement of the attack as possible, and thenceforward kept up by external applications, (mustard and steam-baths are the means upon which our physicians rely,) or by some pleasant sudorific, such as balm or orange-leaf tea. Some such practice as this is that which has proved most successful here. Of course, there are cases in which the disease presents some peculiar symptoms, or assumes an unusual type, where other remedies, even violent ones, have to be resorted to; but this

is true, in so far as I have seen,—whether it is to be attributed to the fact that the cases in which more violent remedies were resorted to were of a more malignant type or not,—that in very few of these cases has the patient recovered.

It is also true, and ought to be stated in connection with what I have written above, that the fever prevailing among us, if it be one and the same disease in all cases, (and there are many good reasons why it should be so regarded,) is a disease Protean in its forms, as there have been, from the first, cases occurring which seemed to resist all kinds of medical treatment,—cases in which, even though the medicine administered produced the immediate effect designed, the disease has moved right onward to a fatal termination. Some ten days ago, one of our first physicians said to me, "I have never felt so powerless in the presence of any disease as in the presence of this. In some of its forms it laughs the

skill of the physician to scorn." And such, I believe, is the feeling of all the more intelligent physicians among us. One exception there was, at least, a few weeks ago. I then heard a practitioner say, in what seemed to me a boasting tone, he had not lost a patient; but this I know, that before forty-eight hours had passed I helped to bury two who had been under his treatment.

While speaking of my personal experience of this fever, I should leave the account incomplete did I fail to note a fact respecting "a presentiment" which fastened itself upon my mind in spite of all I could do to throw it off. For some time past the thought had occasionally occurred, I cannot tell why, that I should die of the disease on my birthday, the 15th of this month. When taken with the fever, just three days before that date,—the very time which it takes in some instances to run its course, —this thought fastened itself upon my

mind as a "presentiment of death;" and, although by no means inclined to superstition, I could not succeed in throwing it off until after twelve at night on Saturday, when of course the time was past. I note this fact, because such presentiments have been very common in this fever,—perhaps owing to the disordered, excited state of the nervous system,—and in many an instance, by depressing the spirits, have had some influence, I fear, in producing the fatal effect they have foreshadowed. I am yet in a very feeble condition—by no means beyond the danger of relapse,—and therefore cannot speak of myself as one recovered; but this much is certain, my presentiment has not been fulfilled.

I am now expecting to leave home for a short time, purposing to go with my family to Hampton on the morrow. In my present state of health I must be useless here for some time to come; and I am going now mainly for the purpose of getting my

family, who have all along been unwilling to go unless I would go with them, beyond the range of this deadly epidemic. They may, it is true, have the poison now in their systems, and if so, it will doubtless work its way out, even in the most healthy place, as many of our citizens have sickened and died in almost all the towns and cities around us; but my hope is, that in a more healthy atmosphere, even if they have the fever, they will have it in a milder form than they would here. And now that my motive for staying is taken away, at least for the present, I feel that the sooner we get away the better.

LETTER IX.

FAMILY AFFLICTIONS.

Saturday, Sept. 29, 1855.

You will probably have heard, ere this letter reaches you, of the sore affliction which has befallen me. My house is now to be numbered among the many in this our city made desolate by this terrible pestilence. I know not what to compare the sudden withering of all my earthly happiness to, save the withering of Jonah's gourd "destroyed in a night;" and never, as now, have I understood that prophet's words—"It is better for me to die than to live." God has taken four out of seven from my little household; and the death of the last three—Mary, our eldest-born, Hatty Porter, my wife's sister, who had lived with us for so many years that she seemed like my own child, and, last of all,

my dear wife also—has come so suddenly, so unexpectedly upon me, that at times I can hardly believe that they are all gone. Yet it is even so. God help me to say—"Thy will be done."

When I last wrote you, we were all packing up to leave for Hampton the next morning. About dusk, a letter was brought me from Richmond, containing the information that Mary had been prostrated by a return of the fever, and that this second attack seemed then to threaten a fatal termination. When she left home, on Thursday of last week, we thought her so far recovered that she might safely leave; and our friends in Richmond having written us, begging us to send her to them, we determined that she should go. For two days after reaching her destination she seemed to be doing well; so treacherous is this disease, especially during what may be called the stage of convalescence; but on Sabbath the fever returned upon her, slightly at first, but making steady

progress, until, on the day on which the letter was written, she had begun to throw up "black vomit." So soon as I read this letter, I at once gave up all hope of her recovery; not because I considered the "black vomit" a fatal symptom in the case of a child of her age,—for I have seen many such here recover,—but because hers was a case of relapse, always more unmanageable than a first attack, and because I knew that she had a shattered constitution with which to combat the disease. I gave up all hope of her recovery. Not so her mother. The strong love of a mother's heart made her cling to the idea that, if she could but reach her child, and nurse her with her own hands, as she had through her first attack, she might yet live. And at once it was determined that, while the rest of the family should stop with me in Hampton* for a day or two, her mother should proceed at once

* Hampton is in the neigbourhood of Norfolk.

to Richmond; and with this expectation we retired to our beds.

Such were our plans. The plans of our Heavenly Father were very different. Awaking about midnight, I was conscious of that peculiar feeling which, to a person with a disordered nervous system, is the premonition of an approaching northeasterly storm; and, knowing how terrible these storms had been in the spread of the pestilence, the fear was at once awakened that the sickness of some other member of the family would, in our case, as in that of many families which I could mention, stop our going upon the very eve of departure. This fear prevented my getting to sleep again; and before daylight it was realized. Cornelia, the next to the youngest of our children, was sleeping in the room with her aunt Hatty; and when, about three o'clock, I heard the door of that room opened, it seemed to me that I knew what was coming as well as I did after the

announcement was made that Cornelia was sick with all the symptoms of the fever. All thought of going was of course at an end. About sunrise the storm reached us; and by ten o'clock Hatty also was in bed with the fever.

In consequence of the derangement of all our means of communication with other places, and the necessarily irregular transmission of the mails, we did not hear again from Mary until, on Sabbath morning, we received the intelligence of her death on the Thursday before. She was but a child twelve years old; and yet, I trust, she had been taught of the Spirit to know and love Him who hath revealed himself to our faith —blessed be his name!—as "the Good Shepherd" who "gathereth *the lambs* in his arms and carrieth *them* in his bosom." More than a year ago, during a revival of religion in our church,—much of the precious fruit of which God has already gathered into his heavenly garner,—she was deeply

impressed with religious truth, and, before the fever first attacked her, had given pleasing evidence of a change of heart. During her last sickness, as I learn from letters from friends who were with her, there was much to encourage the hope that she now sleeps in Jesus. She was the child of many prayers,—given to God and sealed with the seal of his precious covenant; and why should I rebel, when He has only taken that which, before heaven and earth, I had acknowledged to be his?

On Friday, Hatty's fever took a turn for the worse, her brain becoming affected, and an irresistible tendency manifested itself to that state of partial and troubled stupor so common in this disease. On Sabbath morning she breathed her last. She too, I trust, was one of the precious fruits of the revival in our church a little more than a year ago; although, for particular reasons, she had never publicly connected herself with the Church of Christ. From the

peculiar turn her disease took, she hardly spoke at all after we knew that she was in especial danger. I have learned, however, in my experience as a pastor, to look far more to the living than to the dying experience of those taken away, when I would know whether I might or might not have hope in their death; and, from what I know of her religious exercises, I believe that, although it may be said of her, in the language of the prophet, "her sun hath gone down while it was yet day," her sun has not gone down before the great work of life was done.

On Sabbath morning, my dear wife—the main earthly dependence of us all in our sickness—was attacked by the fever; and Grace, our youngest,—originally taken at the same time I was, but who had recovered so far as to be about again,—having no one to check her, had overplayed herself the day before, and so brought on a relapse; and thus were we all sick together. That Sabbath-day was to me certainly the darkest

day of my life. We had just received the intelligence of Mary's death; Hatty was dying; Cornelia and Grace—the only children left me—so ill that I had almost given up the hope of their recovery; and now she who had been our main earthly stay,—for I believe it is often the case that in such seasons of overwhelming trial the pious wife and mother exhibits more true Christian fortitude than the father, (certainly it was so in our case,) and I should do injustice to the memory of the dead did I speak of her in any other terms than as our main earthly stay,—she too was prostrated by the fever.

There was no lack of kind attention on the part of friends. During all the earlier stages of the pestilence, and indeed until its greatest violence was passed, God had given me strength to render aid to others; and now his promise was literally fulfilled: "Give, and it shall be given unto you;—good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give

into your bosom." The members of my own church who were able to be about, and the members of the Howard Association, left nothing undone which they could do for us. Dr. Wm. H. Freeman, of Philadelphia, one of the first physicians from abroad to come to our aid,—who had laboured among us during all the long dreary weeks of the pestilence, and who, in connection with Dr. Wm. J. Moore, our family physician, had attended all the cases in my household,—was unwearied in his attentions, coming always twice and sometimes three and four times a day, and staying all night with us on Tuesday and Wednesday nights. Dr. Moore was himself taken with the disease on Monday, and of course could not come after that day. All that medical science and skill could do was done; yet all in vain. On Monday night Mrs. Armstrong began to throw up "black vomit."

Up to this time, although she appeared ill, she had not seemed so ill as to awaken any

special apprehension in my mind of a fatal termination of her disease. After that, however, I could have but little hope; for, in the case of persons over twenty-five years of age, very few indeed have recovered after the appearance of this fatal symptom. Through God's mercy, she had the perfect use of reason throughout the whole of Tuesday and Wednesday, until toward night on the last-mentioned day, when her mind began to wander; and she was spared the terrible bodily sufferings which I have seen some endure. Throughout these days God was with her of a truth. I have sat by many a death-bedside in days that are passed; indeed, during the last six or seven weeks it seems to me I have been standing upon some "land's-end" of this nether world, with little else to do but to give the last "God speed you" to one after another of those I have known and loved, as the fastenings have been cast loose and they pushed out into the stream, and the current has

swept them forever beyond the range of mortal sight; but never have I witnessed a parting in more perfect peace, on the part of the one that was to go, than this. On Wednesday morning she had her two remaining children brought to her bedside, and, after giving them certain little mementos of herself, told them, as her parting wish, that when in coming years they should think and speak of their mother, it should be not of that mother as in the grave, but of their mother with Christ in heaven. And when, a little later, as I was sitting with her, I said, "It will be pleasant to meet again with your mother, and our dear little ones, who have been taken before to our Father's house," she lay for a moment as if reflecting, and then replied, "Yes, it will be pleasant to meet with loved ones again; but a pleasanter prospect than that, as it now appears to me, is that I shall soon 'see Jesus as he is and love him as I ought.'" Surely he who can doubt the truth of our Christian faith has

never felt its power in such an hour as this. "The *fool* hath said in his heart, No God," writes David. A fool—yes, a "thrice-sodden fool"—is he who can say "no God." On Thursday, about eleven o'clock, the willing spirit passed away; and late in the evening we laid the body beside her sister's.

And now, as I recall the scenes of the last few days, and memory brings up one little incident after another of our parting, there is no gloomy shade—blessed be God!—in the whole picture; there is no painful recollection to cast its shadow upon the scene. It does seem as if the sun of "the better land" had shed its own mellow light upon the darkness of earth, where we travelled together during those days, and where we parted. But, as I look forward,—God help me, make me faithful and humble, teach me to serve him, and, above all, *to trust him*, "all the days of my appointed time, till my change come."

LETTER X.

MORTALITY AMONG THE CLERGY AND PHYSICIANS—REMARKABLE RECOVERY—YELLOW FEVER A DISEASE NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH—LETTERS FROM ABROAD—"A CITY OF CONVALESCENTS."

Tuesday, Oct. 2, 1855.

I HAVE just returned from the funeral of Rev. Wm. Jackson, pastor of St. Paul's Church, in this city. "A good man" he was, "and full of faith." I recollect meeting him shortly after the fever first appeared, and his then speaking to me of the purpose he had entertained of leaving the city during the months of August and September to recruit; "but this purpose," said he, "I have now given up, for, should this fever spread, as there seems reason to fear that it will, we will all be needed." Since then I have met him frequently, going about to visit the sick, to comfort the heart-stricken,

to bury the dead; and I have been struck with the cheerful countenance and tone of conversation he has maintained. Surely, none but the "good man and full of faith" could have lived as he has during this trying summer; and his peaceful end was fitting part and parcel of his life.

Wm. Jackson is the fourth of the Protestant ministers who remained, engaged in the active discharge of ministerial duty, that has fallen. First, Anthony Dibbrell, pastor of the Granby Street Methodist Church; then Stephen Jones, pastor of the African Methodist Church; then Wm. Cadogan Bagnall, a young minister of the Baptist Church, who died during the period of my sickness; and now, Wm. Jackson. Three yet remain, all having had the fever, but now, through God's good providence, convalescent. Four out of seven is a frightful mortality. When I wrote you, as I did some weeks ago, that unless a miracle preserved us there would be more graves than

one in our cemetery, when the pestilence was passed, to bear witness that the Protestant clergy had not forsaken their posts in the time of danger, I wrote just as I felt; but I did not think there would be so many witnesses to this truth then as our cemetery now contains. And the mortality among our resident physicians who remained is as great as among the Protestant clergy. Eleven out of eighteen have died, and not one, I believe, has escaped an attack of the fever. The mortality among the white population, although not so great as among these two classes, yet does not, I think, fall very far short of it. As nearly as I can learn, about five thousand of our white population remained, and of this number, I believe, two thousand are now in the grave. Doubtless, He at whose bidding the pestilence has come has his own wise purposes to accomplish in all this; and we shall yet say, in heaven if not on earth, "Thou hast done all things well." Yet by us, and at

this time, must God be worshipped as He that "maketh darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him, dark waters and thick clouds of the sky."

On the day before I was taken sick, I visited a young man, a member of my church, whom I left, as I thought, past all reasonable hope of recovery,—indeed, in a dying state. Reason was gone, and the troubled stupor which generally precedes death in this disease had supervened; and my own thought was that ere the sun should set he would need his coffin. During my own sickness I was not allowed to inquire about the sick; and when enough recovered to begin again to inquire, so confident was I that he must be dead, that I did not even ask about him. A day or two ago, as I sat by the window, I was startled for the moment by the sight of this young man approaching my house. I do not think I could have been more startled by an apparition from the dead. I mention this case thus particu-

larly because it furnishes a striking confirmation of the remark of a physician of long experience in the treatment of yellow fever, that it is a disease in which we should never utterly despair.

In contrast with this case, I have seen many in the past two months apparently attacked very slightly, and yet the disease, resisting all medical treatment, has progressed steadily to a fatal termination. And, what seems yet stranger to me, I have seen cases in which, up to the time at which the disease had almost done its work, when death was just about to claim its victim, the patient has presented to the eye of a non-professional observer almost no symptom of disease at all. A lucid period immediately preceding the fatal termination of this fever is very common,—so much so, that I now feel sorry to hear it reported of any one, five or six days after the attack commenced, "he seems a great deal better to-day." Some three weeks ago, I was

called to visit a young woman in the Howard Hospital. She and her mother were in the same room. The young woman did not seem to suffer at all, and, not knowing the exact stage of her disease, I thought that in a few days she would be well again. Her mother, an abandoned woman, had got up and dressed herself in spite of the nurses, and was cursing most profanely because her daughter would not rise and quit the hospital with her. This was late in the evening, and before morning they were both dead. While endorsing, then, the remark just quoted, that yellow fever is a disease in which we should never utterly despair, no matter how desperate the case may seem, I would add—it is a disease which should never be trifled with, no matter how slight the attack may appear, no matter how favourably the case may seem to be progressing Yellow fever, like the mole, works beneath the surface, and beyond the range of human sight; and this is one principal reason why

it is a disease so much to be feared, and so much dreaded by those who know any thing about it.

I find that during my sickness a large number of letters have come to me, many of them containing aid for the suffering, and all of them expressing the warmest sympathy with our stricken people in this their season of sore trial. And this not from one section of the country only, nor from old and tried friends alone, but from all parts of our land, and from those whose faces I have never seen, and who could know nothing of us save that we were their brethren and in deepest affliction. The money sent has been in part, and shall be altogether, disposed of in accordance with the wishes of the generous donors, and many a case of suffering will it relieve. But I mention these letters rather to speak of the kind words they contain. Perhaps some utilitarian might ask, of what use are kind words to people in affliction? I an-

swer as I have learned by experience, that to persons situated as we have been and yet are, called to endure as well as to act, encountering all the danger of battle with little of its excitement, nothing is more cheering than the assurance that we are not forgotten in the hearts and in the prayers of those whom God has placed in happier homes. Never before have I understood the great principle which underlies our Saviour's promise, "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones *a cup of cold water only*, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." "*A cup of cold water only!*" it is a little thing in itself, and in general is esteemed a thing of little worth; and yet, to the traveller in the desert, faltering through thirst, "a cup of cold water only" is more precious than gold. Just so is it with kind words. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," is a sentiment which witnesses in itself that it is from heaven.

There is another aspect of the case, too, in which I love to think of the sympathy with us in our afflictions manifested in all parts of this our broad land. The aid sent us cannot be the result of a cold calculation of what, in the end, will put money into the pockets of the giver. In many an instance there is no conceivable way in which such a return could ever be made. The sympathy for us is, I firmly believe, a sympathy welling up from the very depths of the heart, and therefore is a witness as to what is in the heart of "this great people." In my childhood, I recollect to have read an old fairy-tale, in which the murmurings of streams are represented as fashioning themselves into articulate sounds to the ear of those who stooped to drink of their waters. Methinks the fancy of the old fairy-tale has here its realization; and the words this flowing stream utters are, "We are all brethren."

Since the years of my youth I have never

been a politician; and as a pastor I have carefully eschewed all meddling with the party questions of the day. I have never, under any pretext, introduced such questions into the pulpit; for I am no believer in what has been called "preaching the gospel at both ends;"—to preach the gospel at heaven's end is as much as the few years of ministry which God hath assigned me here on earth will suffice for. But I love my country, my whole country, and I love to pray to God for "this thy great people." As I have read the speeches made by angry politicians at the hustings, in our State legislatures, on the floor of Congress, and even from the pulpit,—politicians who would treat our bond of union as "a thing of naught," —I have sometimes feared lest in righteous judgment on the folly of our people God might permit the severance of our States. From time to time, however, incidents have occurred—and this wide-spread sympathy for us I look upon as one of them—which

have shown that these noisy politicians were not *the people;* and, further, that they did not represent *the people.* Could I whisper a word in the ear of some who seem to be honestly disunionists, it would be a word of caution; I would tell them, "There is a power slumbering beneath the surface, which, if aroused, will sweep you before it as the whirlwind sweeps the chaff from the summer threshing-floor." And every kind word spoken, and every dollar sent us, from the North, the South, the East, the West, is a witness at once for the existence and the might of this slumbering power. We are *one* people, and I have faith to believe that, for his own wise purposes, God means to keep us *one* people.

I am now getting ready, a second time, to leave Norfolk for a few weeks, as soon as my two remaining children, now convalescent, are able to travel without danger of relapse. I find that I am recovering my strength very slowly here; and now there

is but little for a minister of the gospel to do here, unless he has the strength to visit from house to house and comfort the afflicted. The fever has swept over the whole city; and now, in the words of our acting mayor, "we are a city of convalescents." So universally has the fever prevailed, that there is not a family in all my congregation which has remained in the city and escaped. Indeed, I know of but one family of any size which has escaped the fever altogether. As you know, I lived for a number of years in the mountainous portion of our State. In that region, when burning brush at "the clearings," in the early spring, the fire often "gets out," and whole mountains are burned over ere it can be checked. Travel over one of these mountains a little later in the season, when the forest trees are beginning to clothe themselves in the garb of summer again, and you cannot but be struck with the strange tinge of desolation which even

the life of the forest presents. Very many of the trees have been entirely consumed; a little mound of ashes marks the spot where once they stood; and those that still live and are beginning to put forth their leaves—their trunks are all blackened and scorched by the flames, and even the edges of the growing leaves have been seared, and present the appearance of a sort of half-life rather than of the vigorous growth proper to the season. I know not how better to describe our city at the present time than by saying that it most forcibly recalls to my mind one of these "burnt forests" in the mountains.

LETTER XI.

DISAPPEARANCE OF THE FEVER — THE ORPHANS — THE PLAGUE-FLY — DESCRIPTION OF IT — HYPOTHESES RESPECTING ITS NATURE.

Tuesday, Nov. 13, 1855.

AFTER an absence of some four weeks, I am now at home again. Our city begins to wear a more cheerful aspect than it did at the time I left, though very different still from the noisy, busy Norfolk of four months ago. Since my return, on the sixth of this month, there have been, so far as I can learn, but two deaths from yellow fever, and both of these in the case of persons who returned to the city before the frost which occurred toward the last of October. Among those who have returned since that frost (and I suppose one-half of our refugees at the least are now at home again) no case of fever has occurred that I can hear of. I

hope therefore that we may now speak of the pestilence as passed, of "the summer of the pestilence" as ended.

On last Sabbath, for the first time for nearly two months, I met my people again in the sanctuary; and I could not throw off the saddening impression of the scene, —presenting, as it did, so much that was calculated to dishearten one that has lived and laboured for our Zion. In the few months last past, God's own hand has thrown down the building of years. Our church, as to numbers, now stands pretty nearly where it did ten years ago, — not altogether, it is true, but in large part, owing to the ravages of the pestilence. In all the congregation present on last Sabbath—and one-half of our families at the least were represented there—I noticed but three families that were not clad in mourning. And in every part of the house there were vacant seats which, as the eye rested on them, called up to memory the forms of

those accustomed to occupy them—forms which shall no more meet the eye on earth. Among the dead of the pestilence are reckoned some of our best members,—those who by their deeds and prayers upheld the hands and cheered the heart of their pastor, whose countenance and co-operation made him feel strong in every good work,—those whose godly lives were ever a sufficient answer to the sneer of the infidel, "What do these Christians more than others?" But why should we yield to despondency? The church on earth was never designed as any thing more than a recruiting station for the "sacramental host of the elect;" and all that can be said with truth of their removal is that the "Captain of our salvation" has found them worthy, through sovereign grace, of being incorporated in that host a little earlier than others.

In one part of the church, on Sabbath morning, sat "*the orphans*," now gathered under the protecting care of the Howard

Association. There they sat, some sixty in number, ranging from fourteen to two and three years in age, all made parentless by the terrible pestilence. Some of them, when found, were in the house alone with the dead body of their last remaining parent; and they, poor little things, so young that they did not know their own names. And there they must have perished but for the mercy which He who hath revealed himself as "a father to the fatherless" had implanted in the hearts of those by whose kindness they are now sheltered. About sixty of these orphans were at church. About eighty in all are now under the charge of the Norfolk Howard Association; and—blessed be God!—through the assistance sent us from abroad, in connection with what we can do at home, I hope that there will be no lack of the means needed to provide comfortably for them all.

But it was not of these matters I purposed writing you to-day. When I had the plea-

sure of meeting you a few days ago, you made inquiry about the plague-fly, as it is called, which had appeared in our city, and about which you desired to know what could be learned. To answer your inquiries respecting this fly was my purpose to-day.

The plague-fly has received its name from the belief that its appearance marks the crisis in the prevalence of epidemic yellow fever. So uniformly is this true in Southern cities, that I have been told the negroes in those cities believe that this fly consumes—actually eats up—the morbific matter which constitutes the immediate cause of the disease. Certain it is that its appearance in our city marked the crisis of the epidemic, in so far as my observation goes. I noticed it first on the last day of August; on the third, fourth, and fifth days of September it was seen in its greatest numbers; and by the time I was taken down with the fever (September 13) it had almost entirely disappeared. During my sickness

a letter came to me from a physician in a distant city, asking me, if possible, to send him some specimens of the fly; and after my recovery, for the purpose of complying with this request, I made careful search throughout my house, that, if possible, I might find some; but in vain. About the 4th of September I caught some of them, and, as their bodies did not seem elastic, like those of the common house-fly, but soft to the touch, in order that I might make sure of preserving them I placed them in a vial, corking it as tightly as I could, and putting it away in a safe place. This vial I now brought out again, when, to my surprise, I found that the flies had entirely disappeared, nothing but a little dark-coloured dust remaining in their stead. In one of the rooms of the house which had not been used after about the 5th of September, I noticed spots covered with a similar dust in the window-sills and on the floor in the corners of the room,—apparently the places

where the bodies of the flies had fallen and subsequently rotted. All this seemed the more strange to me, since, in all my previous experience in preserving insects, (and I have preserved many in years gone by,) I never found any difficulty in keeping insects of this class.

The plague-fly, as I recollect it, and I examined it with some care, is almost identical in shape with the smaller blow-fly or shad-fly, as it is sometimes called, the posterior segment of its body being larger and longer in proportion to the whole body than that of the common house-fly;—the main difference between it and the shad-fly being in the texture and colour of the wings and in the colour of the body. The wings, instead of being transparent, are opaque, and of a glossy bluish-black colour; and the body, in the case of those I first saw, of an ochrey yellow;—in one I noticed on the morning I was taken sick, of a reddish orange. It differed from the common shad-fly also in

the fact that its body and even its wings seemed to lack the elasticity noticeable in those of that fly; and the insect itself was exceedingly sluggish, hardly flying at all, and very short-lived. Within twenty-four hours of the time they first appeared in my house, I found numbers of them lying dead in the window-sills and in the corners of the rooms.

As to the origin and nature of this fly, I cannot entertain for a moment the idea I have heard expressed, that it is but the insect in its perfect state which in an animalcular state floats in the atmosphere and constitutes the morbific cause of the epidemic. The theory of the animalcular nature of the cause of yellow fever I leave to physicians to discuss; but the conversion of a proper animalcule so small as to be invisible to the naked eye (and such this animalcule must be if it exist at all) into an insect such as the plague-fly, is contrary to the whole analogy of nature; and nothing but a gross misconception of the character

of insect-transformations could lead any person to entertain such an idea.

Of the origin of this fly either one of the following hypotheses appears to me in itself probable. A more careful investigation of the subject than I have yet had it in my power to make can alone determine which, if any one of them, is the true one.

1. We may suppose that this fly is a native in those countries in which yellow fever is an indigenous disease, and of such a habit as to multiply rapidly in those atmospheric conditions which accompany the rise and spread of yellow fever; that this insect, having been brought here, perhaps in the egg or larva state, in the hold of the Ben Franklin, one generation had lived its time, in such small numbers as not to attract attention; that this imported generation has produced its eggs in vast numbers, and that from these eggs the swarms of plague-flies which have been in all our dwellings have sprung. Of the production

of insects in immense numbers from a very small stock, in just this way, we have many illustrations.

2. We may suppose that the fly is one which in ordinary seasons exists in small numbers throughout the country, but, in consequence of its small numbers, or because particular attention is not turned to it, generally escapes observation; but that this summer, the same conditions favourable to the production and spread of yellow fever being favourable to its rapid multiplication, it has been produced in the immense numbers in which it appeared in our city. You are doubtless aware of the fact that in some parts of our State all that is necessary to cover a field with a luxuriant growth of white clover is just that wood-ashes be spread upon it. I recollect once to have heard a farmer declare his belief that white clover needed no seed to spring from, but was capable of being produced, by a sort of "equivocal generation," from mere wood-ashes. The true

explanation of this phenomenon, and the one universally admitted by well-informed persons, is that white clover exists in small quantities mingled with other grasses at all times where wood-ashes will produce this effect; and that, being what is called "a potash plant," the application of the ashes so stimulates its growth and production that it soon overgrows and takes the place of the other grasses with which it had been intermixed. In a precisely analogous way we may suppose the multiplication of the plague-fly to be affected by the morbific conditions which give rise to epidemic yellow fever.

3. We may suppose this fly to be the shad-fly, or possibly the common house-fly, in a diseased condition—that diseased condition arising from the same causes which produce a like effect in the human race. That the lower orders of animals, and even insects, should be affected by the same epidemic influences which affect man, is by no

means without a precedent, as every one familiar with the history of disease in its more terrible forms must know.

Of these three hypotheses, I confess that at the present time the latter seems to me the most probable one. The soft and even slimy condition of the fly, unlike that of other insects belonging to the same natural family,—its extremely sluggish habit and short life,—and especially the rapid decay of its body after death,—all seem to favour this idea. Either hypothesis will accord very well with the fact that the appearance of the fly marks the crisis of the epidemic, though perhaps the latter one more fully than either of the others; and this after all is the most important fact to be noted respecting it.

LETTER XII.

RESULTS OF MATURE REFLECTION—HOW WAS THE FEVER INTRODUCED INTO NORFOLK?—WHY WAS IT SO FATAL?—IS YELLOW FEVER CONTAGIOUS?—PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

Monday, Dec. 31, 1855.

In my letters, written you from time to time, I have given you a general account of the course of the yellow fever in this city, noting facts and incidents as they appeared or were credibly reported at the time. In the present letter I purpose to give you the results of mature reflection and more careful examination, especially as bearing upon certain points of practical importance. Of course these conclusions are based upon my observation of the yellow fever as it has prevailed here during the past summer. Whether that disease would be governed by the same laws in other places,

or even here, in other seasons, I cannot tell. I shall give you, in part at least, the facts upon which my conclusions rest, and you can then attach to them just that importance which you may think they deserve. And let me say further, I do not purpose taking any part in the medical controversy respecting the nature of yellow fever. That I leave to physicians, as those to whom it properly belongs.

How was the yellow fever introduced among us? Was it imported in the Ben Franklin, or did it originate on the spot?

This is a question which it is exceedingly difficult to answer; and although a committee of physicians, under appointment from our city councils, are engaged in the investigation of this subject, I doubt whether, after the most protracted examination, they will be able to give an answer which will command the assent of all. When the fever was first known to exist among us, in the then excited state of the public mind it

was impossible to tell what to believe, and what not to believe, of the many reports respecting its origin which were passing from mouth to mouth. Now that this excitement has passed away, it seems to me almost as impossible, though for a different reason, to get at all the facts in the case; and this difficulty is the greater now because Drs. Trugein and Upshur, the former of Portsmouth, the latter of Norfolk,—the two physicians in whose practice most of the earlier cases occurred,—are both numbered with the dead.

It is now said that the first clearly-marked case in Gosport of which any information can be obtained was not that of a labourer employed in breaking up the hold of the Ben Franklin, as reported in my first letter, but that of a woman living very near to the point at which the Ben Franklin lay; her case coming under the care of the physician on the 30th of June, while the labourer already mentioned was not visited

until the 3d of July. But before this, it appears that a seaman had been taken sick on board the steamer as early as the 15th of June, and before she left the quarantine; that he was taken to the Marine Hospital on the 21st, and died with "black vomit" on the 22d of June. There was a case of fever, then, on board the Ben Franklin at the time she came up to Gosport, and a case which had originated on board that vessel; and the fever subsequently existing in Gosport seems very naturally referable to this steamer as its point of origin.

At first it was currently reported that all the earlier cases in Portsmouth could be clearly traced to Gosport. This, it appears, was a mistaken idea on the part of the public. Upon the authority of one of the first physicians in Portsmouth, it is now said that the first case of yellow fever in that place occurred in a house on Scott's Creek, a stream on the northwest side of Portsmouth, while Gosport lies to the south.

This case was first visited by a physician on the 24th of June, and the patient died four days later. This case, then, occurred six days before the first case in Gosport; and, as the person was one who had been bedridden for months, it can in no probable way be traced to Gosport.

A few days before the commencement of his last sickness, Dr. Upshur, who died of the fever late in September, stated to me that the first cases in Norfolk, in his opinion, could not be traced to Gosport; and he called my attention to an inconsistency in the commonly-received account of the matter which had not before arrested my attention. That account, as reported in the Herald of July 30 and copied by me in my first letter, was that the yellow fever had been introduced into Barry's Row by certain families who had removed thither from Gosport ten days before. Now, the first cases reported by Dr. Upshur occurred in Barry's Row on the 16th of July; that is, four days

before the removal of these families from Gosport.

These three points, in each of which the fever seems to have originated independently of the others,—viz.: Page and Allen's shipyard in Gosport on the south, the house on Scott's Creek on the northwest, and Barry's Row on the northeast,—are at the three angles of a nearly equilateral triangle, measuring not far from one and a half miles on a side; and if we draw a line from the southern angle, bisecting that angle, this line will mark the course of our prevailing winds during the summer, and will divide the region over which the fever prevailed into two nearly equal parts. Such are the ascertained facts respecting the origin of the fever; and I know not how better to express the only conclusion which they seem to me to authorize than by using the words of a physician with whom I was in conversation a few days ago:—"The first case in Gosport seems pretty clearly to

favour the idea of the importation of the fever in the Ben Franklin; the first cases in Portsmouth and Norfolk seem just as clearly to favour the idea of its local origin." It would not be a very difficult matter, with the aid of a few plausible suppositions and a little torturing of these facts, to make them bear unequivocal testimony in favour of either theory. But as I have no theory to support, I will leave this work entirely to those who have. I have an opinion, however, and that I will frankly state. Taking the facts stated above in connection with other well-known facts, such as the coming of a French steamer into our harbour early in the summer of 1854, from which seventy cases of yellow fever were taken and treated at the Naval Hospital, (nearer by half to Norfolk than either the house on Scott's Creek or Page and Allen's shipyard,) and yet not one case originating therefrom,—the flight of our citizens with the fever in their blood, during the present summer, and their

subsequent death in all the towns and cities around us, without thus originating a case of fever in any of those places,—the conclusion to which I have come is (unphilosophical as it may appear to some) that the yellow fever would have desolated our city even if the Ben Franklin had never entered our waters; that all that vessel did was simply to hasten the outbreak of the pestilence and locate it in its commencement; that our condition in the early summer may be fitly represented by that of a pile of smoking flax, into which the Ben Franklin cast a blazing brand, thus hastening a conflagration which would soon have burst out without such aid; that, but for our state of preparedness for the fever, that steamer might have come and gone as did the French steamer in 1854, and her visit been, ere this, forgotten. I look upon the pestilence under which we have suffered as, in this respect, like to the epidemic cholera, known to us simply as "the pestilence that

walketh in darkness, the destruction that wasteth at noonday." God only, who directeth its steps, knoweth whence it came and whither it hath gone.

I have lately read an essay on yellow fever from the pen of Wm. Fergusson, M.D., an eminent Scotch physician, of twenty years' experience in the treatment of yellow fever in the West India Islands; and, although there are some things in his essay with which my observation does not accord, the opinion he expresses on this point I can fully subscribe to. Discussing the nature of the fever, he writes: "It came from Boulam, says the contagionist, and is a pure contagion of negro intercourse, a concomitant of the old slave trade; but the blacks, as we have seen, never had and cannot take the disease; and long, I believe, before our slave trade existed, or when, if it existed at all, it must have been in embryo,—when Penn and Venables first subjugated Jamaica to the British crown,—the invaders—a most lawless

bucanier force, by-the-by—were so handled by the tropical pestilence that it was believed they had become the objects of heaven's peculiar vengeance. Its unexpected bursts, invading where there is nothing in the seasons to account for such visitation, are strange and mysterious, but not more so than among ourselves, when diseases previously mild suddenly change their character and assume the most malignant aspect. We may often witness, even under our best temperatures, unexpected attacks of malignant erysipelas, puerperal fever, scarlatina, measles, &c.; while at other times, apparently of more unfavourable aspect, these probably cannot be called into existence at all, or, if they do come, are unattended with any malignant character. These things are beyond our ken; we can only see, and tremble, and wonder." And afterward he writes:—"There is much of the unfathomable in regard to yellow fever. Its occult sources,—its appalling out-

breaks, often without preliminary warning,—the absence of gradation in the types of fever previous to the grand explosion,—its being restricted to the European races, and being confined almost entirely to the Western world,—mark it as a disease equally strange and terrible."

Can any reason be assigned why the yellow fever was so terribly destructive in Norfolk during the past summer,—so much more so than it has ever been even in New Orleans?

As it appears to me, one principal reason why it was so terribly destructive in our city is to be found in the fact that there were but few among us protected against its attack by having previously had the disease. It is one of the most clearly-ascertained laws of yellow fever that in its attack it so exhausts the susceptibility of the system to the disease that it is rarely the case a person suffers from it a second time; or, if attacked a second time, the attack is a slight one.

Hence, at the South, they are now resorting to inoculation for protection against this fever, just as formerly they resorted to similar means for protection against small-pox. In New Orleans, the fever prevails to a greater or less extent almost every season; and hence the great body of those who remain there during the sickly season are those who, having once had it, are not liable to have it again. In Norfolk, on the contrary, nearly thirty years had elapsed since it had prevailed to any extent; and it was only here and there that one of our citizens could expect exemption on the ground of having once had the fever. What confirms me in this opinion is the fact that the difference between Norfolk and New Orleans was not in the ratio which the number of deaths bore to the number of cases,—for this ratio was nearly the same,—but in the ratio which the number of cases bore to the number of our people who remained in the city. I may say

with almost literal truth, of our white population who remained at home we all had the fever.

There was nothing very peculiar in the season, unless it be in the frequent occurrence of the chill northeasterly storms mentioned in my former letters, and the frequent failure in our usual sea-breeze, consequent, I suppose, upon these storms. Neither drought nor unusual heat characterized the summer last past. Nor was there any thing in the condition of our city, that I saw, different from what it has been for the last five years—the time during which I have been a resident of Norfolk. There is a good deal of made land in the city; and the filling-in has been done in part with pine-wood and with mud from the river-bottom; but then, as you know, this kind of filling in has been used here for the last fifty years. And, besides, in Portsmouth there is little or no made land of this kind, and yet the fever was as

fatal there as with us; and with us it was no more fatal in the parts of the city immediately adjoining this made land than it was in those parts where the virgin soil had never been disturbed; indeed, the only family of any size that, remaining throughout the summer, escaped the fever altogether, was a family residing near the west end of Main Street, where this made land stretched all along to the windward of them. There are filthy portions of our city, too, as there are in all places of the size of Norfolk; yet these places were not more filthy this summer, I think, than usual; and, although the fever seemed first to locate itself in them, when it subsequently spread to cleaner portions it was as fatal there as in Barry's Row.

Here again let me quote a remark or two from the essay of Dr. Fergusson. "It is impossible to imagine a country of purer soil than the island of Barbadoes. It has long been thoroughly cleared; but, as it is the

ordinary landing-place of fresh troops from Europe, there was no place during the war where there existed greater mortality and suffering from yellow fever." "Stagnation of atmosphere accounts for much in regard to it, but not for all; vegetable putrefaction for little or none; nor does malaria for the whole, unless it be some occult malaria of the Atlantic shores; for, prolific as the Eastern tropic may be, and certainly is, of malaria in all its forms, it rarely produces the epidemic characterized by the leading symptom of black vomit."

Did the yellow fever, as prevailing in Norfolk during the past summer, appear to be a contagious disease?

In the popular sense of the term, a contagious disease is one propagated by contact with the sick, or through the instrumentality of the breath of the sick, or some subtle effluvium from the diseased or dead body, and consequently a disease to be avoided by keeping entirely aloof from the sick and

the dead. An epidemic disease, on the other hand, is one the immediate cause of which appears to be in the atmosphere, and hence it is likely to be taken by all the people residing in a certain place or district at the same time, and in which there is no danger in nursing the sick or handling the dead, if this be done out of the district in which the epidemic prevails. Thus understanding these terms, I do not hesitate to express the opinion, and that with great confidence in its correctness, that the yellow fever which has prevailed among us was an epidemic and not a contagious disease. This opinion is at variance with the popular opinion heretofore prevailing in this part of the country, and at variance with the opinion I had always entertained myself until the experience of the past summer satisfied me of its correctness; and, as it is a point of practical importance, I will state the facts which have satisfied my own mind somewhat more fully than otherwise would have been the case.

The few members of the Presbyterian church (and I speak thus particularly of them because I can speak of them from my own knowledge) who, remaining in the city, escaped the fever altogether, were almost without exception those who were active in nursing the sick and ministering to their necessities; while the few who carefully secluded themselves, avoiding all such communication with the sick as would spread a contagious disease, almost without exception took the fever.

Those who were active in ministering to the sick, and who did take the fever, did not take it, as a general thing, until as an epidemic it reached the part of the city in which they resided. The cases of apparent exception to this general rule were most, if not all of them, I believe, like that of my nephew, Edmund James, who spent the night in a part of the city to which the disease had spread. In my own case, I was for more than six weeks almost constantly

during the day among the sick, the dying, and the dead; often talking and praying with them when their breath was so offensive (for in this disease the breath generally becomes very offensive before death) that I have quitted the room sick at the stomach—and this in parts of the city where the fever was raging with greatest violence; and yet I did not take the fever until as an epidemic it reached the part of the city in which I lived; and then I was one of the first to be prostrated by it. And I could mention many other cases similar to my own.

Those employed in burying the dead, in so far as I know, did not take the fever until as an epidemic it reached the part of the city in which they dwelt. No man could have laboured at his calling more faithfully than Mr. Dobs, our principal grave-digger. From early in the morning until late in the evening he was constantly at work in the cemeteries. I have myself seen him eating

his meals there; and he laboured thus when, before the order was issued forbidding interment in vaults, the stench from the dead bodies was sickening; and yet, throughout almost the whole summer, he remained as at other seasons. He lived at the extreme northern end of the city—the part to which the fever extended latest of all. But it did extend to that part of the city; and then he and his wife both died of it. After having helped to bury almost all "the dead of the pestilence," he himself was by other hands laid among them.

Those who resided in the adjoining country, and came into the city during the day only, in no instance that I have heard of took the fever. Some in my own congregation there were who acted thus; and they all escaped. So with the country-people who attended our markets; and there were some who attended throughout the season. Not one of them, that I have heard of, died of the fever.

Our citizens fled in almost every direction, many of them with the poison in their systems; and they sickened and died in almost every place to which they fled,—in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, in Washington, in Richmond, in Petersburg, in Hampton, and on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Not less than thirty died, I suppose, in Baltimore, and twenty, at the least, in Richmond; and yet in not one of these places did a case of yellow fever originate, by contagion, from these sick and dying fugitives.

That the disease spread through the atmosphere, as its medium of transmission, seems fairly inferable from the fact that it spread rapidly in the direction of the prevailing winds, and but slowly in a direction across the track of those winds. The direction of our prevailing winds, during the summer, is from the South; and it is but rarely that the wind blows from any other quarter. If we map down the whole region over which the yellow fever prevailed, and

then draw a line in the direction of the prevailing winds, this line will be found to measure not much short of five miles; while a line drawn at right angles to this will not, at the widest point, measure more than one and a half miles. The morbific agent —be it of what nature it may—did not seem to roll forward in a well-defined wave; but, spreading first as a subtle miasm of feeble energy to a certain district, those most open to attack fell before it; then, as the poison increased in intensity, the stronger fell; and when it reached its height most of those remaining were taken down. And thus it comes, I think, that it seemed in some instances as if it had spread by contagion. And, besides this, the liability to take the disease was found to be far greater by night than by day. Indeed, in so far as I saw, a person might go into the parts of the city in which the fever prevailed with greatest violence with perfect impunity during the day, especially if the day were a pleasant,

sunshiny one; but a single night spent in such a place usually proved fatal.

These facts, to my mind, clearly demonstrate the non-contagious character of the yellow fever as it has prevailed in our city during the summer past. And now for an inference or two, based, of course, upon the supposition that this disease will be governed by the same laws, in other places and other seasons, which it has obeyed here during the season past.

The fear of contracting the disease by visiting the sick—a fear in consequence of which some have died through neglect in our city, poor Stapleton for example—is an unreasonable fear, provided only that the visits be made by day. And the fear of nursing the sick or burying the dead, in a place to which the miasm has not spread, is a fear equally unreasonable.

The idea of escaping the fever by secluding oneself, while remaining in a city or part of a city over which the disease has

spread itself, is an idea which will disappoint the hopes of those who trust to it. Exemption is to be sought in flight to some place beyond the range of the epidemic, and in flight alone.

Such quarantine regulations as those adopted at one time by many of the towns and cities, and even counties, around us—but soon, I am happy to add, repealed again,—are perfectly useless to those adopting them, and cruel to those against whom they are adopted.

Such quarantine regulations cannot be enforced in a country like ours. Make them as strict as you please, and in many ways they can and will be evaded. The way in which our citizens passed in every direction in spite of these regulations I have already mentioned. And the history of every such attempt which has been made in our country in years gone by is in this respect the same with that of the attempt made during the past summer.

Such regulations are uncalled for. As already stated, fugitives from Norfolk and Portsmouth sickened and died of yellow fever in all the cities around us, and yet not one case was thus originated in any of those cities;—not by contact with their bodies while sick, nor by their burial after death, nor from the clothes they carried with them, nor from the beds on which they died.

Such regulations are cruel. They often cause the fugitive to expose himself (as in the case of many fugitives from our city during the past summer) in such a way as to bring on and aggravate an attack of the disease,—so that he who but for this exposure might have recovered, dies. The utmost that can be said with truth is that yellow fever may be transported in the confined air of the filthy hold of a ship; but in the person of the sick, never. And here again let me quote a remark from the essay of Dr. Fergusson,—a remark which I wish to endorse in its every particular. "*To pen up*

the inhabitants upon the infected ground is to aggravate the disease a thousand-fold; and is, in fact, as cruel and absurd as it would be to barricade the doors against the escape of the inmates of a house that had taken fire, on the insane pretence that they would otherwise spread the conflagration."

THE END.

STEREOTYPED BY L. JOHNSON AND CO.
PHILADELPHIA.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 014 442 015 9